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ABSTRACT

This publication features articles on prevention of school violence and focuses upon promising practices that reflect practical approaches to positive behavioral interventions. Directed at both regular and special education students, these articles feature prosocial skills for improving student responsibility and discipline, effective parenting strategies, conflict resolution and violence prevention programs, and techniques to diffuse disruptive behavior in the classroom. Articles include: (1) "Disciplining Students with Disabilities" (K. P. Dwyer); (2) "Prevention Strategies for the Elementary School Classroom" (P. Kay , A. Ryan); (3) "Prevention through School-Family Linkages" (P. Kay, A. Ryan); (4) "Bullying Fact Sheet" (G. Batsche, B. Moore); (5) "Position Statement: School Violence"; (6) "How to Build Your Child's 'EQ': A Guide for Emotionally Intelligent Parenting" (M. J. Elias, S. E. Tobıas, B. S. Friedlander); (7) "The Peacemakers Program: Effective Violence Prevention for Early Adolescent Youth" (J. Shapiro); (8) "Anger Management for Young Children: A Handout for Parents" (B. M. Levy); (9) "Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation: A Guide for Educators" (M. M. Chittooran); (10) "Functional Behavioral Assessment: Looking Beyond Applied Behavior Analysis" (J. R. Nelson, M. L. Roberts, M. Bullis, C. Albers, B. Ohland); (11) "Time-Out: Guidelines for Teachers" (T. S. Ewing); (12) "A Prosocial System for Improving Student Discipline and Responsibility" (J. McMullen). Also included are a resource guide, and video reviews. (GCP)

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BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS: CREATING A SAFE ENVIRNMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

Winter 2000

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Behavioral INTERVENTIONS

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

Winter 2000

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NASP

The National Mental Health and Education Center is a public service program of the National Association of School Psychologists.

Introduction

There is growing recognition among educators, parents and the community that truly effective schools must impart more than the three Rs; they must also attend to children's social and emotional learning. The deliberate teaching of behaviors such as sharing, helping, initiating relationships, requesting help from others and empathy give children the tools they need to optimize their life skills and competencies. The 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97) reaffirmed this approach by calling for positive behavioral interventions into all aspects of special education. Schools can meet this challenge by utilizing the expertise of school psychologists in addressing classroom management, school climate, social skills and violence prevention.

In this publication, the National Association of School Psychologists draws upon promising practices that reflect practical approaches to positive behavioral interventions. Directed at both regular and special education students across the school years, these articles feature prosocial skills for improving student responsibility and discipline, effective parenting strategies, conflict resolution and violence prevention programs, techniques to defuse disruptive behavior in the classroom, and implications of the behavioral provisions of IDEA '97. We hope that practitioners, educators and parents will find this publication an important resource in assuring that schools are safe learning environments for all children.

This issue edited by Andrea Canter, Ph.D., NCSP (Editor, Communiqué) & Victoria Stanhope (Director, Special Projects).

Disciplining Students With Disabilities

by Kevin P. Dwyer, NASP President

A child runs, out-of-control, down the busy school hallway and punches another child who is quietly waiting in line outside her classroom. She starts to cry while the disruptive child continues down the hall, not responding to the teacher aide's commands to stop. Another adult says, "He's special ed, there's nothing that we can do. You can't send him to detention. I'll tell his teacher." The aide is frustrated and upset as she comforts the crying child.

A child, who is labeled seriously emotionally disturbed, sets a trash can on fire. When brought to the principal's office the security specialist is told that it is a manifestation of the child's disability and the usual disciplinary procedures will not be followed. The security specialist leaves muttering, "Those kids get away with murder!"

Both examples are serious, wrongful misunderstandings of the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA procedural safeguards were designed

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to assure that students with disabilities (receiving special education and related services) were not arbitrarily removed from their parent-approved program without consent and were guaranteed a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) within the least restrictive environment (LRE).

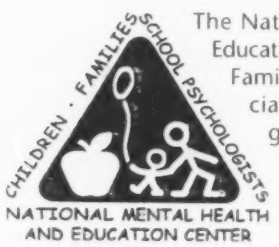
There is nothing in IDEA that restricts schools from disciplining children with disabilities. In fact, some would say that, by not addressing these dangerous behaviors, the student with special needs is *not* receiving an "appropriate" education. Both of the above children may need specialized services to change the disruptive and dangerous behavior and to make sure that whatever discipline is used works in preventing a reoccurrence of that behavior.

This article is designed to provide a set of practical concepts to improve the chances that positive behaviors will increase and negative behaviors will decrease among children with disabilities who warrant special education and related services under IDEA. Some of these concepts may also be applied to other troubling students. Regardless of students' classification, all interventions should be evaluated as to their effectiveness. We know, for example, that expulsion may result in a positive behavioral change for some students but may be ineffective or increase negative behavior in others. Research shows that when education is disrupted by long absences (such as expulsion), the likelihood of dropping out increases dramatically and that children with special needs are more likely to drop out and never complete a diploma, to remain unemployed and economically dependent. Expulsion may be a deterrent for many students who worry about their academic progress and who hold to a high standard of behavioral control. The threat of expulsion may be one small component of a comprehensive discipline plan. However, there is little research regarding the actual effectiveness of expulsion in improving school discipline.

The materials contained in this article are based on several resources and the author's 30 years experience as a school psychologist. Many of the steps noted below already are found in the practices of some school districts. A "best practices" example which this document follows is the policy of the Parkway School District in Missouri. These steps have been modified to conform to the author's interpretation of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97).

IDEA was amended to better ensure that children with disabilities whose behavior blocks learning have those behaviors addressed within their IEP. Although this was *expected* practice prior to IDEA '97, it was seldom implemented; children with such needs were underserved and punished and too frequently dropped out of school. The amendments also balance intervention with safety, allowing school staff to remove children from their school for possession of a weapon or drugs (including drug sale or use). One remedy allowed by the IDEA '97 is placement in a 45-day alternative placement. Other options can be tried, including parent-supported change in placement and IEP. More complex is the removal by hearing examiner of a child when there is a preponderance of evidence that maintaining the child in the present placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

It is hoped that these principles will increase positive behavior conducive to learning and reduce the need to use expulsion and suspension as interventions for behavior problems. Positive interventions will also increase classroom teacher and parental support for actions taken to improve school discipline and safety.



The National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families of the National Association of School Psychologists is an information and action network to foster best practices in education and mental health for children and families — building upon strengths, understanding diversity and supporting families.

The primary goal of the National Mental Health and Education Center is to provide leadership to address the critical issues that affect education and improve the outcomes for children and their families. The problems of school failure, classroom disruptions, violence and drug abuse have actually increased during each decade over the past 30 years. They place a heavy burden upon families, children, schools and communities. At the same time, decision-makers are raising standards for graduation — often without concurrently improving instruction, classroom management, school climate or anticipating how this affects children and families.

The National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families works to provide support for children and families and improve the professional training and practices of school psychologists and pupil service providers. It is dedicated to ensuring children receive the optimum services in their schools and communities.

For more information on the National Mental Health and Education for Children and Families, contact Lesley A. Carter at the National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814; e-mail: <*center@naspweb.org*> or visit our web page at: <*www.naspweb.org/center.html*>.

Communiqué is a publication of the National Association of School Psychologists. Many of the articles in this publication are reprinted from *Communique*. The content of this document reflects the ideas and positions of the authors. The responsibility lies solely with the authors and does not reflect the position or ideas of NASP.

1. Maintaining a Safe Environment Conducive to Learning

School systems have the legal responsibility to maintain safe, violence-free schools. Part of that responsibility includes the establishment of a code of conduct containing specific consequences for violations of the code. School authorities have the right and responsibility to discipline children (including the removal of children from their present school) when those children violate school rules by engaging in conduct that materially and substantially disrupts the rights of others to be physically safe and educated. When conduct endangers the student or others, temporary removal of that student may become imperative. Schools also have these rights and responsibilities when students with disabilities violate school rules, causing disruptions or danger to themselves or others.

All students have the right to know the rules of conduct and to learn to master school rules. All children learn differently. Many children learn intuitively through observation, experience and encouragement. Many other children need further assistance and instruction in order to master developmentally appropriate behavior that enables them to attend, learn, share and cooperate with other children and adults. As school psychologists, we know that knowledge and demonstrated skill are required before we can presume a rule is "learned." The level of learning also varies and it is important for schools to acknowledge marginal, minimal and developmentally standard levels of mastery.

Students with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services have, by definition, problems in learning and skill development. Unlike their nondisabled counterparts, they may, in some cases, have difficulty demonstrating socially appropriate behaviors. Unlike their nondisabled peers they also have a continued right to a free and appropriate public education within the least restrictive environment even when their behavior violates a discipline rule or code.

When any child, disabled or not, has been found to violate a code resulting in proposed disciplinary action, that child has rights to challenge the reason for the action, including the right to prove that the accusations are false, distorted, exaggerated or based upon racial, ethnic, gender or even disability bias. All students have the right to challenge the severity of the consequent disciplinary action recommended by the school authorities.

2. Responsibility to Teach Code of Discipline to All Students

Schools have the responsibility to make sure that all children attending, including those receiving special education and related services, are familiar with the discipline code and that their families also have the opportunity to know and understand the code. Parents of children with disabilities should be given the opportunity to discuss the discipline code when it is a concern for their child and to be partners in finding effective ways of assisting in maintaining the code and its intent. Parents are allies in helping predict problems related to codes of conduct and their individual child's strengths and needs. Such discussions can generate IEP goals as well as necessary exceptions that may prevent the child from meeting a requirement of the school's code.

3. The IEP as Vehicle for Effective Behavior Management

Children who have disabilities that prevent them from understanding or responding appropriately to components of a discipline code or school rule should have those exceptions incorporated and addressed in their IEP. IEPs are designed to address both traditional academic needs and to meet "each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability." The law also says that schools shall consider, when needed, "strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports to address that behavior" that impedes learning.

Examples of IEP discipline issues: A student with Tourette's Syndrome may repeat vulgar, obscene words or bark over and over. Obscene language may violate the discipline code, but in this case is out of the child's control. Working with the child, family and physicians, the special education and related service program should determine the best possible plan to reduce and compensate for the disruption that this syndrome causes. Another child may be extremely cognitively challenged and need very concrete examples of what the school discipline code means, just as a child who is deaf or visually impaired needs special accommodations. Children with Attention Deficit Disorder, generally, should not be suspended for inattention but their IEP should contain goals, support and specialized help to increase attention and sustained effort. The same can be true for a child who is severely depressed or withdrawn and therefore inattentive. This behavior should also be comprehensively addressed to increase learning and productivity.

A child with autism who bangs her hand on her desk over and over cannot be treated the same as a child or group of children who are doing the same thing to deliberately disrupt the class. A child who cannot speak clearly or communicate feelings or ideas can become extremely frustrated and may stomp out of the class or toss his pencil across the room. Training in finding alternative methods for communicating and for coping with frustration must be in place before the disruptive behavior becomes routine and results in disciplinary action, which may only increase the disruptive behavior.

All of the above examples require an effective individualized intervention plan documented in each child's IEP. If such a plan did not exist and a disciplinary action were taken resulting in a suspension, expulsion, an arbitrary change-in-placement or illegal removal from FAPE, it would be a violation of the child's civil rights.

4. Addressing and Preventing Behavior Problems

It is the responsibility of the IEP team to review the discipline code and determine what specialized help and instruction the child may need to understand the code and

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consistently demonstrate the appropriate classroom and school behaviors conducive to learning. The team should identify and address the difficulties that may occur and may be related to the child's disability, and establish plans that will reduce the chance that such infractions will occur. The team should plan to provide adaptations and compensations for those behaviors that require an intervention plan and also address those behaviors that may remain unchanged due to the complexity of the disability. Behavioral goals, like goals for reading or other elements of the general curriculum, should be incorporated into the IEP and not be developed as a separate document or plan. To design a separate "behavior plan" implies that such plans should be treated differently, apart from academic functioning. Additional distinct "behavior plans" could also cause prejudice and establish a sub-set of children within special education (those with behavior plans). There is evidence that effective individualized academic goals and services reduce frustration and behavior problems.

5. Behavioral IEP Goals, Parent Involvement and Services

A child with a disability and the family or parent surrogate should be aware of the discipline code and the consequences for violating each component of that code. Parents can assist the school in finding effective strategies for positive behavioral interventions and strategies for the IEP. They should participate in the IEP development to help determine what exceptions to the discipline code are necessary and to help design behavioral goals that progressively address those exceptions to reduce behavioral difficulties. These plans should include the special education and related services interventions designed to assist the child in maximizing her/his social responsibility. Behavioral goals, as with academic goals, should be measurable, reviewed and modified as needed. As with other goals, services and interventions, frequent review is imperative to success.

6. Problematic Patterns of Behavior and Prevention

When children with disabilities demonstrate a new pattern of problematic behavior potentially leading to suspension, the school should initiate an IEP meeting to determine if additional interventions or modifications in the IEP are needed. Such interventions may reduce the chances of the child accumulating a series of suspensions which may, over time, constitute an inappropriate "change in placement." Any behaviors that block learning and the success of the educational program should be addressed. When the behaviors are not related to the disability, it remains important to both address the problems and to restate the pattern of code violations and the consequences for those violations to the child and parent. Schools and parents should work cooperatively to change the pattern of negative behavior. The school should support the parent in securing other resources to assist in positive behavioral change and work cooperatively with those resources.

7. Weapons and Drugs

Weapons violations require quick and deliberate administrative action. When a child with a disability violates a rule involving weapons, safety should be the priority both for the child and others. If the local school rules mandate "automatic" expulsion and notification of the police, a written notice of such action must be made available to the parents. Weapons must be clearly defined in the code of conduct. IDEA requires initiating an IEP meeting within 10 calendar days. An ordinary expulsion (lengthy removal from educational opportunity) is no longer permitted for children with disabilities who violate weapon laws. Removal from special education services for more than ten days violates the child's right to FAPE. IDEA '97 does not use the term "expulsion" but uses the term "a change in the placement of a child with a disability."

Drug use and possession are also intolerable in schools. Drug use can endanger both the user and peers. It is also a violation of state and federal laws and may involve police action. Schools should be aware that drug use and addiction can be higher among some groups of children with disabilities. Drug use, abuse and addiction require professional intervention which frequently includes drug treatment and physical monitoring. A review of the IEP and a functional assessment may control some of the related behaviors demonstrated by a child with a disability who is a drug abuser, but drug use and addiction require assessment and intervention beyond the IEP team's skills and may require interagency involvement. Drug possession should not be dismissed as unrelated to disabilities since some youth may be cognitively unaware of what they possess.

The IEP team is now required to review and modify the IEP to address that behavior. If the behavior was not already addressed on the IEP, the IEP team should implement interventions and goals to address that behavior. The law also requires a "functional behavioral assessment" when such behaviors have not been addressed. A true functional behavioral analysis or assessment cannot be effectively carried out as proposed in the law. Such assessments require a series of observations by highly qualified professionals who already know the child in depth, including the child's strengths and needs. Such an assessment should also follow the guidelines of any review, reevaluation or assessment according to the law's requirements for reevaluation. In other words such an assessment should consider the existing IEP goals and services as well as what is needed. School psychologists should be involved in this review as the persons most qualified to address behavior and learning. They should become involved in assisting in developing the most effective disposition as soon as possible.

8. Behavior "Likely to Result in Injury"

A child with a disability who causes injury to self or

others cannot be placed in a different program without parental consent. If the parent does not consent, a hearing officer can be requested to determine if a change is required, when there is a preponderance of evidence presented "that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others." The hearing officer is required to examine the evidence to determine the above as well as the "appropriateness" of current placement, including the reasonableness of the school's services, interventions, aides and other efforts to minimize the risk of harm related to behavior within the current placement. The hearing office must also determine that the interim alternative 45-day placement provides effective IEP services to ensure FAPE, including participation in the general curriculum.

9. Manifestation Review

When the IEP has already addressed problem behavior, the team has valuable information about the relationship between the child's disability, the behavioral concerns, the components of the IEP and classroom, including the services provided. When a suspension or 45-day alternative placement is recommended, the IEP team, assisted by qualified professionals, should determine if the student's behavior (misconduct as defined) is related to the disability and whether the current placement is appropriate by evaluating all factors related to the students' behavior and IEP. This should include review of the interventions tried and services provided to prevent the presenting problem. Such a review should be comprehensive and focus on multiple factors, not merely the behavioral goals of the child's IEP.

The determination that a behavior is a manifestation of the child's disability can be a complex process. It must be determined by qualified professionals, on an individual, case-by-case basis. It cannot be determined by the child's label or category. For example, a label of "emotionally disturbed" does not by itself imply a manifestation of the disability. A behavioral goal or its absence does not determine manifestation. It is not decided by the "ability of the child to determine right from wrong." Under IDEA, a manifestation determination must include an analysis of the child's program as well as the child's physical, cognitive, developmental, mental and emotional challenges. The child's behavior may be considered unrelated to the disability if the disability did not impair the child's understanding of the impact of the serious consequences of the behavior and if the disability did not impair the ability of the child to control the behavior. These factors must be viewed in the context of ecological variables and IEP services and goals.

It is best practice that the school psychologist assisting in such a determination knows the child and the child's program. School, classroom and external factors can result in additional inappropriate and dangerous, reactive behaviors from a child with disabilities. Ecological factors that can be addressed within the LRE should be considered in a manifestation review to prevent inappropriate recommendations of changes in placement.

10. When Behavior is a Manifestation of the Child's Disability

When the dangerous behavior is the result of the disability, expulsion is an inappropriate action. The child cannot be expelled for that behavior. However, this does not mean that the child must remain in the present placement. When it is determined that the placement or the IEP is not meeting the child's behavioral needs, modifications should be made to IEP and, if necessary, to the placement and needed services, to assure that the behavior will be addressed and to prevent its reoccurrence. When dangerous behavior such as weapons violations continue, a controlled, secure placement may be necessary. Any placement should continue FAPE as well as addressing the behaviors of concern. When parents have been involved in the development of the IEP, including the behavioral goals and services, agreement is more likely to occur between school and family regarding modifications in the program and changes in placement.

11. When Behavior is Not a Manifestation of the Child's Disability

A child with a disability, whose dangerous misconduct is found to be unrelated to his/her disability and whose IEP, program and services are appropriate to address the child's needs, may be subject to the regular discipline code of consequences, provided that the child continues to receive FAPE. The parent continues to have the right to appeal this decision and any decision regarding placement. Even when the behavior remains a perceived threat or danger to the child and/or others, FAPE should continue but may need to be provided within a more restrictive alternative center where control reduces danger. Restrictive alternatives may include, for example, a juvenile detention center, residential treatment center or other secure facility. It is not in the child's, the school's, community's or family's interest to maintain a child using an existing IEP and placement when the weapons or dangerous behavior cannot be effectively addressed within that placement. It is in no one's interest to terminate FAPE to a child with a disability who is in need of special education and related services.

Kevin P. Dwyer, NCSP, is NASP President (1999-2000). *This article is reprinted from* Communiqué, *October 1997.*

IDEA Resources

For updated information about IDEA '97 and other resources for behavioral intervention, visit the NASP Website at:

<*www.naspweb.org*>

or

<*www.ideapractices.org*>

Prevention Strategies for the Elementary School Classroom

by Pam Kay & Amy Ryan

Does your school use a classroom-based approach to prevention of emotional disabilities?

- Teachers teach a social skills curriculum to help students understand and use expected behaviors.
- Teachers encourage suitable behavior by recognizing students when they behave appropriately. All classroom rules and consequences are clearly stated so that all students understand them.
- Options are available for children who learn core academic material at a different pace, or in a different way from the majority of their classmates.

Teachers know that some students need extra support to adapt to the demands of school. Effective teaching practices and minor disciplinary measures are not enough to keep all students engaged in classrooms. Students who show *internalizing* behaviors, such as withdrawal and extreme shyness, can have just as much trouble learning as children with *externalizing,* or acting out, behaviors. Both types of behaviors can pose frustrating challenges to educators, and take valuable time away from teaching the content today's standards demand. Repeated patterns such as the inability to fit in with peers, or being at odds with teachers, may indicate that a child is at risk for developing serious emotional problems. It is important to break the cycle early so children at-risk can learn behavior that makes it easier for them to be successful in school. Teachers can encourage more adaptive behaviors in their students by making preventive techniques part of their classroom management strategy. Three common elements of classroom based prevention of Emotional Disorders (ED) are: *1) Social Skills Instruction, 2) Positive Behavior Management and 3) Academic Enrichment.* These three elements are beneficial to all students, and offer the extra social training children at risk for developing ED need. Ultimately, these techniques save valuable time so educators can focus on academics instead of discipline.

Several research projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the United States Department of Education used classroom based strategies that benefitted all the children in the classrooms. **Project SUCCESS** (University of Miami) and the **Behavior Prevention Program** (University of Kansas) provide examples of three common elements in classroom-based prevention measures.

Social skills instruction teaches students how to behave in school so that they can take advantage of positive social and educational opportunities. Social skills curricula break down abstract concepts like "listening," "cooperating," and "asking for help" into concrete steps that young students can understand and apply. Of course, every conscientious teacher already models appropriate behaviors and guides students to do likewise. However, some students need an explicit approach and direct instruction. Those students that have maladaptive social behaviors are exposed to 'replacement behaviors' that help them learn more effective ways to get the attention from teachers and the friendship from their peers that they need. Their more socially adept peers learn non-threatening ways to remind classmates to use the skill being taught. Teaching social skills directly, reinforcing the use of these skills, in addition to after-the-fact discipline, establishes common expectations for behavior in the classroom. There are many social skills curricula available commercially, and content should be selected based on the needs of the children in a particular class or school.

An effective way to teach social skills is to link behavior lessons with academic activities. Most instructional formats require social as well as academic skills, such as discussion, cooperative learning, peer tutoring and group problem solving. ***Project SUCCESS*** uses the following steps to teach and reinforce each social skill:

- Define the social skill to be taught in observable terms.
- Teach the behaviors that make up the skill.
- Model the skill.
- Engage students in practicing the skill.
- Provide reinforcement and feedback for skill performance.
- Have students self-monitor their behaviors.

These skills are broken down into concrete categories and taught in steps. For example, "Listening Manners" is a social skill that involves these behaviors: have your eyes on the speaker, hands still, feet on the ground, ears ready to listen, lips quiet and concentrate on what the speaker is saying. The skills are taught through demonstration and role playing, then reinforced by the teacher and peers during academic activities.

Positive behavior management systems rely on carrots more than sticks, meaning they place more emphasis on rewarding appropriate behaviors than on punishing negative behaviors. For positive behavior management systems to be effective, every student needs to understand the teacher's expectations for appropriate behavior. Educators clearly define the behaviors that are appropriate for the classroom by posting rules and consequences for breaking them. Once these guidelines are established, teachers model behaviors, have students role-play, praise students for what they are doing correctly, and redirect students when their behavior strays beyond acceptable limits. Naturally, it is vital that the teacher be consistent in applying consequences for inappropriate behavior so that treatment of students is at all times fair.

In the ***Behavior Prevention Program,*** teachers identify their expectations and teach the appropriate behaviors directly. Key instructional strategies include modeling, pro-

viding practice, rewarding good behavior, and having students self-monitor their progress. To give structure to these components, teachers use a strategy called the Good Student Game (Babyak, Luze & Kamps, in press), the steps of which are:

- Identify when to play the game.
- Identify and clearly define behaviors to be rewarded.
- Set goals for individual and group performance.
- Select rewards (e.g. pencils, notebooks, extra time at recess).
- Set the monitoring interval, meaning variable intervals when students will assess and record their own behavior.
- Teach the game procedures to all students.
- Play the game.

The Good Student Game provides a structure that helps students become aware of their own behavior, as well as for teachers to consciously give positive reinforcement to students when they behave well. It can be applied to whatever area students need improvement in because the behavior goals are determined by the teacher. Willia Crawford, the principal of a school where The Behavior Prevention Program was implemented, commented, "The strong programs implemented have strengthened the social and academic performance of our students. Our students now display more of a positive disposition, and discipline problems have declined. Our student attendance has improved significantly as well."

Academic enrichment is a vital component of classroom prevention because it ensures that students master key knowledge and skills. Learning difficulties can often lead to behavioral problems. For example, students who have difficulty staying on task during reading group may have an underlying reading problem that should be assessed. Remedial programs, such as those in reading, can play important roles in preventing behavior problems (Rankhorn, England, Collins, Lockavitch, & Algozzine, 1998). Academic tutoring — and especially peer tutoring — is often cited as a viable prevention strategy. Peer tutoring can have a positive effect on student learning, is cost effective, and improves both the tutor's and tutee's social development (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1992). Because many teachers are already overtaxed, one creative solution is peer tutoring structures which provide interesting learning opportunities for both the tutor and the student getting help. Peer tutoring is also a good way to reinforce positive social interactions for both students.

Project SUCCESS offers cross-age peer tutoring which uses a phonological awareness program and partner reading. Cross-age peer tutoring has been shown to result in significantly improved reading scores for students identified to be at risk for behavioral problems. The Behavior Prevention Program sets up peer dyads that engage in oral reading and comprehension practice. These peer tutoring sessions, given three to four times per week, facilitate basic literacy skills and active student engagement in instruction.

Prevention in the classroom is just one of the components of a preventive school. Other USDE/OSEP funded research projects focus as well on school-wide prevention and school-family-community linkages.You can read more about all six elementary and middle school projects* by logging onto our website at <*http://www.air.org/cecp/preventionstrategies*>.

* The Achieving Behaving Caring Project, Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Project, Improving the Lives of Children, Linkages to Learning Program, Behavior Prevention Program and Project SUCCESS.

For further reading about Project SUCCESS:

Montague, M., Bergeron J. & Lago-Delello, E. (1997). Using prevention strategies in general education. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 29* (8), 1-12.

McKinney, J.D., Montague, M., & Hocutt, A.M. (1998). Systematic screening of children at risk for developing SED: Initial results from a prevention project. In C. Liberton, K. Kutash, & R. Friedman (Eds.), *The 10th Annual Research Conference Proceedings, A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Knowledge Base* (pp. 271-276). Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health.

For further reading about the Behavior Prevention Program:

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Pam Kay is Project Director and Coordinator of Collaborative Dissemination Research Projects and Amy Ryan is Project Writer/Editor (U.S. Office of Special Education's SED Prevention/Intervention Programs, School Research Office, DOE), both housed at the University of Vermont. This article is reprinted from Communiqué, *October 1999.*

Prevention Through School-Family-Community Linkages

by Pam Kay & Amy Ryan

Does your school use School-Family-Community Linkages for prevention of emotional disorders?

- The school develops partnerships with parents to develop consistent responses to the child's behavior between home and school.
- Teachers understand that a child's ability to learn can be compromised by social, emotional, economic or health needs that are not being met.
- The school establishes links to other social service agencies and provides a pathway for families who need extra help to take advantage of these resources.

For some children, classroom-based and school-wide approaches will not be enough to prevent Emotional Disabilities. Children whose daily lives place them at high risk for developing emotional disorders (ED) need their school to serve as a pathway to other human services within the community. Living with poverty, inadequate health care and nutrition, physical or emotional abuse, and homelessness can create negative stress that gets in the way of learning. A coordinated approach among schools, families and community agencies can remove or reduce the impact of these obstacles. Increasingly, schools are addressing prevention through the following approaches:

- Developing partnerships between parents and educators to build students' behavioral skills and competencies.
- Building linkages with community agencies such as mental health and other social services which are vital to the educational success of some students.

Several projects funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs establish school-family-community linkages that positively impact students' success in school. Two projects, the ***Achieving Behaving Caring Project***, (University of Vermont) and the ***Linkages to Learning Program*** (University of Maryland) provide unique and effective examples of how linkages between the school, families and the community are a vital component in the prevention of emotional disorders.

Programs to help students at risk for developing emotional disorders are most successful when solutions involve the home (Cheney, 1998; Watson & Rangel, 1996). Parents, meaning the person(s) responsible for the daily care of the child, work together with educators to build student behavioral skills and competencies. They work to stop aggression before additional problems develop. Even students with more serious behavior problems benefit from reinforcement and mild consequences that are similar between home and school settings so that the messages they receive are always consistent.

The **Achieving Behaving Caring Project** found that when parents join teachers as equals in Action Research (Kay & Fitzgerald, 1997; McConaughy, Kay & Fitzgerald, in press.), they develop new relationships that can ultimately strengthen their involvement in their child's education. Action Research involves the systematic investigation of a specific challenge facing the student by those most closely concerned with him or her. In education, action research is usually carried out by teachers, either singly or in collegial groups. Parent-Teacher Action Research combines the benefits of parent-teacher teaming with the systematic and democratic structure of action research. With the support of Parent Liaisons, parents can participate as equal partners in their child's education.

The parents and teachers of a child identified as at risk for developing emotional disorders begin their work by describing the child's strengths and identifying what is puzzling to them about the child's behavior. This discussion forms the basis for the action research process, which involves the following steps:

- Choose research questions about the child's behavior.
- Collect data about the child's behavior that answer the research questions, perhaps in the form of journal entries, notes, the child's school work, or anecdotes.
- Reflect on the data and share thoughts with one another.
- Analyze the data, making sure that both parents and teachers participate.
- Formulate a practical theory about what might be the causes of the child's behavior.
- Use the practical theory to guide a new plan of action.
- Implement the new plan of action

Parents and teachers set mutual goals for the child's progress during the school year so that expectations and consequences for behavior are consistent, and the child

can learn faster. Observation and reflection yield new knowledge that can help teachers and parents improve their practices. The ABC Project found significant improvements for the children whose parents and teachers worked together in the PTAR Process, both in their academic performance and their social skills.

A child's academic success can be compromised by health and social problems. It is important to link the various services provided by human service agencies with the schools. Many families have needs, but they may not be aware of the resources that are available to them in the community. The **Linkages to Learning Program** is a collaborative, school-based program that provides an array of health and human services to children and families in an accessible and familiar setting. The goal of the program is to address social, emotional, economic and health problems that interfere with a child's ability to succeed in school. Linkages to Learning is located on the grounds of an elementary school and is available to all children and families at the school. The program is staffed by a multidisciplinary team that works with school personnel and community providers. Funding is managed through a consortium of local, state, federal and foundation sources.

There are four key components to the Linkages to Leaning Program:

- *Social service assistance for families.* Case managers work with families to help them learn about and access resources in a variety of areas, including housing, food/clothing, financial assistance, employment, legal/immigration concerns and medical/dental needs.

- *Mental health assessment and treatment for children and families.* Services for children include comprehensive mental health assessments, individual and family therapy, classroom-based social skill groups and after school groups. Psychological and medical evaluations also are available. Services for families include counseling, support groups and workshops on child-related topics.

- *Educational support.* Services for children include evening tutoring programs and recreational activities. Adult education classes are offered for parents. Once a month, parents, children and teachers participate in a Family Learning Night, which focuses on building partnerships between home and school. Workshops on topics related to prevention/management of behavioral and emotional problems are offered to teachers.

- *Health and wellness services for students.* Health services are available to children who demonstrate financial need. These include primary health care, immunizations and physical exams; diagnosis and treatment of acute illnesses and minor injuries; management of chronic illnesses; hearing and vision testing; some prescriptions, medication and laboratory testing; dental education, screening and referral; and health/nutrition education.

Program staff for Linkages to Learning include project directors, case managers, mental health therapists, community service aides, the school-community health nurse and a health room technician. These staff work closely with guidance counselors, a parent outreach coordinator and resource staff. An advisory board made up of school representatives, parents, local business people and other community members meets quarterly to ensure that Linkages to Learning responds effectively to the needs of the community.

Establishing school-family-community linkages is just one of the components of a preventive school. Other USDE/OSEP funded research projects focus as well on classroom based and schoolwide prevention. You can read more about all six elementary and middle school projects* by logging onto our website at *<http://www.air.org/cecp/preventionstrategies>*.

* The Achieving Behaving Caring Project, Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Project, Improving the Lives of Children, Linkages to Learning Program, Behavior Prevention Program and Project SUCCESS.

For further reading about the Achieving Behaving Caring Project

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For more information about Linkages to Learning, contact Rika Granger, the Linkages Resource Team Representative, at (240)777-1109.

Pam Kay is Project Director and Coordinator of Collaborative Dissemination Research Projects and Amy Ryan is Project Writer/Editor (U.S. Office of Special Education's SED Prevention/Intervention Programs, School Research Office, DOE), both housed at the University of Vermont. *This article is reprinted from* Communiqué, *October 1999.*

Bullying Fact Sheet

by George Batsche & Benjamin Moore

Definition of a "Bully" — A bully is a child who fairly often oppresses or harasses someone else; the target may be boys or girls, the harassment physical or mental (Olweus, D.). Bullies are usually boys, although girl bullies do exist.

Definition of a "Victim" — A child who for a fairly long time has been and still is exposed to aggression from others; that is, boys or possibly girls from the child's own class or maybe from other classes often pick fights and are rough with them or tease and ridicule them. Two types of "victims" emerge:

- "Passive Victims" — Anxious, insecure, appear to do nothing to invite attacks and fail to defend themselves.
- "Provocative Victims" — Hot-tempered, restless, create tension by irritating and teasing others and attempt to fight back when attacked.

Some Facts About the Bully Problem

- Approximately **one in seven** school children is either a bully or a victim.
- This affects approximately 5,000,000 elementary and junior high school students in the United States.
- Approximately 282,000 students are physically attacked in America's secondary schools each month.
- An estimated 525,000 attacks, shakedowns and robberies occur in an average month in public secondary schools.
- In a typical month about 125,000 secondary school teachers (12 percent) are threatened with physical harm and approximately 5200 actually are physically attacked.
- **Almost 8 percent of urban junior and senior high school students miss one day of school each month because they are afraid to attend.**

Why Do Some Children and Adolescents Become Bullies?

There is no one reason why a child might become a bully. However, we do know what types of circumstances will likely help a child develop bully behavior. Bully behavior is developed mainly as a result of factors in the **environment**. This environment includes the home, the school and the peer group. **Bully behavior is learned**. The good news is that because the bully behavior is learned, it can be unlearned, particularly if we do something about it when children are young.

What Factors in the Environment Will Likely Contribute to a Child Becoming a Bully?

- **Too little supervision of children and adolescents.** Without supervision, children do not get the message that aggressive behavior is the wrong behavior to have.
- **Bullying pays off.** Many children learn at a very young age that when they bully their brother sister or parents that they get what they want. Often we are too busy or too tired to "fight" with the child so we just give in. Each time we give in when the child is aggressive or just plain obnoxious, we are giving the child the message that **bullying pays off**.
- **Do as I say, not as I do.** Some children seem more likely to imitate adult aggressive, bullying behavior than other children. In some families, when children are punished for aggressive behavior (even if they see it in their home) they stop being aggressive. For most children, however, if they see aggressive behavior they will imitate it. When parents fight and one parent intimidates the other and "wins," the child gets the message that intimidation gets you what you want.
- **Harsh, physical punishment.** Although spanking a child will often put a stop to the child's behavior, spanking that is too harsh, too frequent or too physical teaches a child that it is OK to hit other people. In particular, this teaches a child that it is OK for bigger people (parents) to hit little people (children). **Bullies usually pick on younger, smaller, or weaker children.** They model, in their physical attacks, what happened to them **personally** in the home. **The worst thing that can be done is to physically punish a bully for bully behavior.**
- **Peer group that supports bully behavior.** Many parents do not know what their children are doing with the peer group. Their child may be running with other children who advocate bully behavior. In order for the child to "fit in," the child must bully like the peers.
- **Getting more negative than positive messages.** Children who develop bully behavior feel that the world around them (home, school, neighborhood) is

more negative than positive. These children have more negative comments (get yelled at, told that they are wrong) than positive comments. They expect the world to be negative with them so they attack first. By picking on others, they feel more important and powerful. If they cannot feel important because parents and teachers make positive comments and "reinforce" them, then they will feel important in negative ways.

- **Poor self-concept.** Children who get more negative comments given to them than positive ones will develop a poor self-concept. These children then believe that the only way to be "accepted" is to pick on others.

- **Expecting hostility.** Because of the negative messages received and the poor self-concept, bullies expect their parents, teachers and peers to pick on them, blame them or otherwise humiliate them. Therefore, they attack before they are attacked, even when in reality they were not about to be attacked. They assume hostility when none exists. In many ways, the bully's philosophy is, **"The best defense is offense."**

School Factors

- Larger schools report a greater percentage of violence.
- Schools with clear rules of conduct enforced by the principal report less violence.
- Schools with students that report fair discipline practices report less violence.
- Small class size relates to less violence.
- Schools where students mention that they are in control of their lives report less violence.
- A principal who appears to be ineffective or invisible to students reports more violence in that school.
- Schools with principals that provide opportunities for the teachers and students to be participatory members of decision-making report less violence.
- Cohesiveness among teaching staff and principal relate to less violence.

Why Do Some Children and Adolescents Become Victims?

Less is really known about "victims" but there is some information which will help us understand the victim situation to some extent.

- Most victims are anxious, sensitive, and quiet.
- Victims generally do not have many, if any, good friends at school.
- Victims seem to signal to others that they are insecure and worthless children who will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted.
- Bullies often target children who complain, appear physically weak, seek attention from peers and adults and seem emotionally weak.
- These children may be overprotected by parents and school personnel and are therefore unable to develop coping skills on their own.

What Can Be Done About the Problem?

In General

- A strong commitment is needed in the home and school to change the behavior. Parents need support from school and mental health/community workers to enforce positive behavior patterns. **Parent training is essential.**
- Specific training is needed in the social skills that the child lacks to get along with other children. This can be done in school through social skills training and in the home through increased supervision, more positive discipline and modeling.
- Increase, significantly, the amount of positive feedback that the child gets in the home and the school.
- The pattern of bullying begins at an early age; as early as age 2. Early intervention is essential. The older the child becomes, the more difficult change will be. After age 8-10, change is very difficult.
- Develop a strong value system in the home and in the school that gives a clear message that bully behavior is completely unacceptable.

Specific Things To Do in the Home

If you have a serious bully or victim problem, contact the school psychologist in your child's school building and ask for help. In the meantime, the following steps will significantly help the problem:

- Be sure that you are being as positive as possible with your child. Shoot for 5 positive comments for every

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negative one that you direct to your child. You will have to work very hard and "catch them being good."

- Do not use physical punishment. Instead, use removal of privileges, time spent in their bedroom, work tasks around the house or helping younger children in the neighborhood or in the home as a consequence for bully behavior.

- When you see your (or another) child engaging in bully behavior, put a stop to the behavior immediately and have the child practice a more appropriate behavior instead. For instance, if you have a child who pushes his sister away from a toy in order to play with it, have the child practice (at least 3 times) asking for (and receiving) the toy the correct way.

- If the child is a victim, have the child practice telling the bully to, "stop bothering me" and then have the child walk away. The parent should be there to supervise the behavior of the bully and the victim.

- Parents must model, or show, the children in the home behavior between adults or between adults and children that is not bully behavior. If the children see parents yelling and bullying each other or if this is how the parent talks to the children, then the child will do that behavior as well. Remember to operate from the "**Do as I say AND as I do**" point of view.

- Supervision is of great importance. If you can, supervise the situations in which your child will have the opportunity to become either a bully or victim. If you cannot supervise the children under those circumstances, try to find someone who can. If you cannot supervise and cannot find someone, then do not allow the child to participate in that situation.

Specific Things to Do in the School Setting

- Establish a school climate that clearly and emphatically disapproves of bullying. This can be accomplished through school-wide campaigns (including contests, posters, parties, dances, school events) that support behaviors which are the opposite of bullying. These behaviors can include "buddy systems," cooperative learning, peer tutoring, big brother-big sister programs and others.

- Establish a climate in which rules of conduct are enforced and are developed by the students and teachers cooperatively.

- Discipline practices should emphasize restitution and positive practice rather than expulsion, paddlings and humiliation. That is, when students are caught bullying they should apologize, demonstrate the correct behavior, and then have to spend a specified period of time helping (public service) younger, less able children.

- Teachers and administrators should work to increase the number of positives directed toward children on a daily basis. The ratio, just as in the home, should be approximately **5** positives for each negative. Teachers must "**catch them being good**." This may be difficult but the teacher will have to give positives for behaviors they usually take for granted. The situation may occur where the teacher will have to "set up" a situation in order to give positives. This might include sending an older "bully" to a younger class in order to help a particular student with an academic exercise. The "bully" can then receive recognition for this behavior.

- In classrooms where there are a number of students with the "bully" problem, the use of social skills training sessions throughout the year may be necessary. If the teacher is unfamiliar with these skill training sessions, a call to the school psychologist can help with materials and technical assistance.

- On a building level, the establishment of a "discipline" committee is suggested. The purpose of the committee would be to identify the five top discipline problems in the school and to develop intervention plans that will be implemented regardless of where in the school the problem behavior occurred. The discipline measures should emphasize restitution and positive practice, not physical punishment, exclusion or humiliation.

- Although it is very difficult to justify, bullies should not be removed from the school setting unless absolutely necessary. The teaching of social skills, the value campaign against bully behavior and the increased number of positives directed toward bullies for appropriate behavior are more productive, in the long run, than exclusion.

The above are only examples of where to begin thinking about and acting on the problem.

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Position Statement: School Violence

Children and youth are the victims of more crimes than any other age group in the United States today. Violence against children in any setting is disturbing; when it occurs at school, it is especially destructive, and swift action must be taken to ensure the safety of all students and the staff who care for them. The National Association of School Psychologists resolves to help rid America's schools of the destructive influences of violence in all its forms. This can be accomplished through prevention programs, through direct assistance to victims of school violence, through efforts to reduce the incidence of future violence by perpetrators, and through joining other community groups to sponsor anti-violence initiatives.

Violence in schools violates fundamental assumptions that society holds about the role of schooling in the lives of children and youth. When parents leave their sons and daughters at the schoolhouse door each day, they trust that their children will be cared for and safe. When violence occurs at school, this trust is broken in profound and permanent ways. For this reason, NASP believes that schools are rightfully held to a stricter standard than are other segments of society.

School violence threatens the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of students and school staff. These threats may occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, and they include but are not limited to physical assaults with and without weapons, bullying, and social isolation. To reduce school violence, schools must ensure that no harm comes to anyone on school campuses at any time. To achieve this goal, efforts must be made to reduce obvious aggressive and illegal behaviors as well as other behaviors that, while not illegal, may damage a student's development and negatively affect school climate.

Creating Safe Schools

Schools must maintain campuses that are safe and conducive to learning. NASP believes that efforts to create safe schools can take many forms. Essential actions include but are not limited to intervening with aggressive students, implementing victim support programs, establishing school-wide violence prevention programs, and improving school climate.

Intervening with aggressive students: As a result of public demands to respond punitively to threats of violence at school through "zero-tolerance" programs, schools often focus disciplinary actions on perpetrators of violence. Policies that focus only on catching and punishing violent behaviors fall far short of the goal of creating a safe school environment. As alternatives to practices such as corporal punishment and ceasing educational services, NASP promotes the use of positive methods of school discipline such as crisis intervention and the application of behavior management principles and strategies. Schools must also make efforts to modify the behavior of students who have engaged or are at risk of engaging in violent behavior. NASP strongly supports systematic efforts to teach social skills and self-control to children and youth as part of a school-wide plan to create a safe and healthy climate conducive to learning.

Implementing victim support programs: Meeting the needs of victims appears self-evident. However, survey data show that most schools respond to antisocial and aggressive behaviors through disciplinary action against the perpetrators, while neglecting to provide appropriate support and counseling for victims. Children who have been the victims of school violence perceive schools as failing to protect them, and as a result they may feel threatened and unsafe while at school. These children display many characteristics common to individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including blocked learning and symptoms of serious emotional problems. NASP strongly supports the availability of counseling and recovery programs for victims of school violence.

Establishing school-wide violence prevention programs: NASP encourages the implementation of programs designed to teach peacemaking, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. Such programs are natural bridges between interventions that focus on individual change and those seeking to change the ecology of the school at the organizational level.

Improving school climate: A comprehensive program to reduce school violence includes efforts to affect the general climate of the school itself. Such programs may not focus on specific violent behaviors directly but seek to change the conditions that are, directly or indirectly, conducive to violent acts. Individualized instruction and remedial support where needed can reduce academic failure and frustration that may contribute to violence. Programs to decrease racism and other forms of intolerance, increase appreciation of diversity, and improve levels of trust can also decrease violence by creating a climate of acceptance and understanding and by improving the quality of the relationships among and between students and staff.

While school violence may engender a desire to discipline the aggressors harshly, NASP urges school personnel to temper disciplinary responses with efforts to promote cooperation, positive social skills, and peaceful means of resolving conflicts. Addressing school violence must go beyond increasing campus security and establishing procedures to apprehend and punish students who have violated school rules. A comprehensive campaign to end school violence must also encompass efforts to increase support, trust, and caring among students and staff.

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How to Build Your Child's "EQ": A Guide for Emotionally Intelligent Parenting

by Maurice J. Elias, Steven E. Tobias, & Brian S. Friedlander

Why "Emotionally Intelligent Parenting"?

What's Different About This?

This is a very demanding time to be a parent. Maybe the only thing more difficult is to be a child. There are more influences than ever on children and more sources of distraction. James Comer, M.D., renowned educator and author of "Waiting for a Miracle: Schools Can't Solve Our Problems, But We Can," observed that never before in human history has there been so much information going directly to children unfiltered by adult caregivers. Cornell child development specialist Uri Bronfenbrenner says that we are in the age of hecticness; we are busy planning how to get our kids to where they have to be next, to get ourselves where we have to be, rushing and worrying if all of our arrangements will work out.

Now, parents have the added concern about school safety. It is important for parents to to realize that schools share this concern. But schools continue to be among the safest places for children to be. Nevertheless, inappropriate expressions of anger and a climate of disrespect are highly damaging to academic learning and send the wrong messages to the children we all want to prepare for adult roles. Disruptions of learning are more likely to take place when children are out of control and lack responsibility and self-discipline; they are more likely when children lack the ability to separate out what is genuinely in their interest from what is peer pressure, media and Internet influence. And children who get "hijacked" by strong emotions are not able to focus on schoolwork or household responsibilities. To a greater and greater extent, schools are recognizing that they must attend to children's life skills; as children's first and most lasting teachers, can parents do any less?

What Do We Want for Our Children?

We want our children to grow up to be knowledgeable, responsible and caring. We don't want intellect without compassion; we don't want responsibility without skills; and the world can't run on caring alone, unfortunately. What is needed is Emotionally Intelligent Parenting, and these are the principles:

1. Be Aware of One's Own Feelings and Those of Others
2. Show Empathy and Understand Others' Points of View
3. Regulate and Cope Positively with Emotional and Behavioral Impulses

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Role of the School Psychologist

First and foremost, school psychologists can take a leadership role in encouraging schools to develop a comprehensive approach to violence reduction. School psychologists are trained to a) respond to crises spawned by violence; b) counsel victims; c) implement prevention and intervention programs designed to reduce aggressive behaviors among youths and others; and d) consult with school staff implementing social skills programs and other programs designed to teach peaceful ways to resolve conflicts. These are essential components of a comprehensive school safety plan.

Summary

NASP recognizes that violent acts, wherever they occur, have complex origins and consequences. Efforts to reduce violence at school, therefore, must be multi-faceted. A successful program will ensure the ongoing safety of all students and staff both by creating conditions that discourage violence and by responding quickly and effectively when violence occurs. To be truly comprehensive, however, a violence reduction program will seek to influence student attitudes toward violence, teach students and school staff effective conflict resolution skills, and work to create a climate that promotes tolerance and understanding among students and staff. Such a program will be most effective when blended within broader violence prevention efforts involving local law enforcement, juvenile probation, public health personnel, and other parent and community groups. When an entire community commits itself to reducing violence, the future health and well-being of its children and youth can only be enhanced.

— Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly, July 14, 1996

Supporting Information

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4. Be Positive Goal and Plan Oriented

5. Use Positive Social Skills in Handling Relationships

Parents who are engaged in Emotionally Intelligent Parenting focus on the above principles in their own parenting and encourage their development in their children, both at home and in school. They are concerned about giving children the skills needed for success in life, not just in academics. There are specific, simple techniques that draw strength from the way they lead to small, positive changes in our relationships with our children that are repeated day after day. The techniques reflect tremendous advances in understanding how the human brain works and the role of emotion in learning and memory.

How Will It Help Them Learn Better?

We know that strong anger, frustration, anxiety and sadness, and similar emotions, interfere with learning. Children who hurt are less able to learn than those who do not. But these hurts can be offset by strong positive feelings, by children having, using and being recognized for valued strengths. Emotionally Intelligent Parenting involves encouraging strengths and giving children the skills needed to manage impulsive behavior, relate positively to others individually and in groups, and to develop empathy and the ability to take others' perspectives. These are skills essential to academic, career and life advancement.

Is This Relevant to Special Education?

Many children who find their way into special education would benefit from instruction in social and emotional learning in school, as well as related parenting approaches in the home. Whether or not children are labeled as "emotionally disturbed," the problems of their lives, as well as the sometimes unpleasant circumstances in which they find themselves in school, invoke strong feelings that make learning and retention of learning difficult. Parenting with emotional intelligence means that you are concerned with your child's mind and your child's heart.

It takes Emotionally Intelligent Parenting to stay focused when there is so much distraction around us. But this is what children need from parents, especially when they are having difficulty. Emotionally Intelligent Parenting is about building a positive identity for being a part of one's family, and for families to realize that fun is an essential part of well-being and learning. The time to start is now!

An Informal Measure of Family Members' Emotional Intelligence

To help you better understand how to apply Emotionally Intelligent Parenting to your everyday family issues, take a moment to assess your Emotional Intelligence and that of your children. Ask yourself the following questions:

My Emotional Intelligence:

1. How well do I know my own feelings? How well do I know the feelings of my family? Think of a recent problem in the family. How were you feeling...your children feeling...others involved feeling?

2. How much empathy do I have for others? Do I express it to them? When was the last time I did this? Am I sure they are aware of what I am doing? Am I able to understand another's point of view even during an argument?

3. How do I cope with anger, anxiety and other stresses? Am I able to maintain self-control when stressed? How do I behave after a hard day? How often do I yell at others? When are my best and worst times, and do these vary on different days?

4. What goals do I have for myself and my family? What plans do I have for achieving them?

5. How do I deal with everyday, interpersonal problem situations? Do I really listen to others? Do I reflect back to people what they are saying? Do I approach social conflicts in a thoughtful manner? Do I consider alternatives before deciding on a course of action?

My Child's Emotional Intelligence:

1. How well can my child verbalize feelings? If I ask her how she feels, can she respond with a feeling word or does she tell me what happened? Can my child identify a range of feelings with gradations in between? Can my child identify feelings in others?

2. How does my child show empathy? When was the last time he seemed to relate to another's feelings? Does he show interest in others' feelings? When I tell him stories about others' misfortunes, how does he react? Can he understand different points of view? Can he see both sides of an argument? Can he do this when in a conflict situation?

3. Can my child wait to get what he or she wants, especially when it is something he really wants? Can my child wait to get something that is right there in front of him that he can't have? How well can he tolerate frustration? How does he express anger and other negative feelings?

4. What goals does my child have? What goals would I like her to have? Does my child ever plan things out before doing something? Have I ever helped her develop a plan for achieving a goal?

5. How does my child resolve conflicts? How independent is she in resolving conflicts? Does she listen, or turn others off? Can she think of different ways of resolving conflicts?

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Strengths: For both yourself and your children, think about areas of strength, the areas you and they are really good at. Give yourself pat on the back for having these — we mean it! — and praise your children for theirs as soon as you can. Also think about areas you would like to focus on for change. Think of what times of day you are most likely to show these skills, and when you are less likely to show them. These patterns are very important, because we help ourselves when we try to swim with the current, as opposed to going against it.

Find the answers: You may find you are not sure of some of the answers to the questions we pose. This is more common than not, because we are asking parents to think about things a little differently than they are used to doing. One way to get some answers is to videotape a (non-offensive) sitcom and then watch it with your child. Or, read a story to your child. At various points in the tape or story, pause and discuss the following:

- How the main character is feeling.
- How the other characters are feeling and what they are thinking.
- How your child feels about the characters' feelings.
- What the different characters' goals are and what they think the characters' plans might be.
- How your child thinks the characters handled the situation.
- What your child thinks was good about how the characters handled the problem and what the characters could have done better.

The Top Ten List of Ways to be a More Emotionally Intelligent Parent

10. ***Expect your children to do as you do, not as you say.*** Modeling EQ skills is extremely important if you really want your children to use them. Show them how to regulate their feelings and express their anger appropriately by doing so yourself. When problem solving an issue of your own, think out loud so your children can hear you reflect, set goals, evaluate alternatives, plan and anticipate roadblocks. If you want your children to listen to you, listen to them.

9. ***Remind them, remind them, remind them***. How many times is a child exposed to the letter "A" before they are expected to read it? Self-control and problem solving skills are a lot harder to learn and children need a lot of prompts and cues before they will begin to use the skills independently.

8. ***Use active listening***. Everyone wants to be heard and understood. Paraphrasing back to children what they are saying to you reinforces them for communicating to you. It also allows you to gently rephrase their statements into more appropriate or accurate language. For example, when you ask how a child feels and her reply is that her sister is an idiot, you can help her clarify her feelings by saying, "Gee, it sounds like you are really upset with her." This opens the door to communication rather than shutting it with criticism.

7. ***Ask open-ended questions***. Avoid making accusations such as "Why did you hit him?" Ask what happened, what was he doing, what did he want to have happen? Open-ended questions encourage the child to talk openly.

6. ***Ask a question, ask another question***. It is important to stay in a questioning mode. If you follow-up a question with another question, you will get more information, encourage the child to think more and avoid a lecture on your part (which will certainly end communication).

5. ***Sometimes appear to know less than you do.*** Ask questions as if you do not understand. Instead of "Why did you fail that test?" ask, "I don't understand how you got this grade. What happened?" When the child says he studied, ask, "That doesn't seem fair... what could have happened so that the studying did not work?" This gets the child to think in a nondefensive manner.

4. ***Be patient... be VERY patient***. Learning the skills necessary to get along in all kinds of social situations and to manage strong feelings is not easy, especially if the skills don't appear to come naturally for your child. It can take a long time, both when teaching it and when children are learning it. Fortunately, childhood lasts a long time. Be patient with them and with yourself. Look for small improvements, starting in certain situations or with certain people. Build on these improvements and you will find it easier than expecting miracles. Skills take time to learn but then last for a lifetime.

3. ***If you bend, you won't break***. Be flexible in the way in which you try to build you child's EQ. Look for a variety of opportunities to teach and reinforce these skills. Above all, do not expect perfection in yourself or others.

2. ***Know your child***. Some children learn quickly, others take more time. Generally, as children get older

they can handle more independence and responsibility but only give as much independence as the child can take responsibility for.

1. ***Have fun!*** Enjoy your children. Have a sense of humor. Situations usually aren't as bad as you think at first. Even when things are especially troubling, being depressed about it and angry at your child all the time will definitely not help. Children learn best when they have a close, loving relationship and when they are having fun. Make learning the skills of Emotional Intelligence fun. Your whole family will benefit.

Resources for Building Emotional Intelligence in Your Family

Elias, M. J., Tobias, S. E.., & Friedlander, B. S. (1999). *Emotionally Intelligent Parenting: How to Raise a Self-Disciplined, Responsible, Socially Skilled Child.* NY: Harmony/Random House.

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Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence.* NY: Bantam.

Lessons for Life: How Smart Schools Build Academic, Social, and Emotional Intelligence. (1999). A Video Inservice Kit created by the National Center for Educational Innovation, distributed by the National Education Service. (*<www.nesonline.com>*)

Salovey, P., & Sluyter, D. (Eds.) (1998). *Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Development.* NY: Basic Books.

Web Sites Related to Social and Emotional Intelligence

< www.CASEL.org> — Leading site for EQ in the Schools

<www.6Seconds.com> — Leading provider of materials for teachers and parents related to EQ

<www.EQParenting.com> — Leading site for parenting information related to EQ

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National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families
www.naspweb.org/center

Video Reviews

Break It Up — Managing Student Fights
Research Press, 1995
Reviewed by Elaine Lukenda

Narrated by Arnold P. Goldstein, the video offers an opportunity to observe and model the application of nine steps designed to focus teachers' attention and actions in the high pressure, emotional situations that characterize student fights. Based upon the review of research on aggression management and anecdotes of in-school fights described by teachers from across the country, the sequence of steps clarifies what to do as well as what not to do to deescalate student aggression. The nine steps consist of (1) Making a Quick Assessment of the Fight Situation; (2) Calling for Help; (3) Using Defusing Tactics to Calm Disputants; (4) Separating Disputants Safely; (5) Controlling the Fight Scene Crowd; (6) Interviewing the Disputants; (7) Taking Appropriate Disciplinary Action; (8) Debriefing Student Bystanders; and (9) Attending to Your Own Emotional Needs. Explicit and realistic examples of the technique are presented for each of the three grade levels (elementary, middle and high school) of students in different settings (school hallways, classrooms and cafeteria). The actors represent both genders and a diversity of racial backgrounds.

Positive Adolescent Choices Training — PACT
A Model for Violence Prevention Groups with African American Youth
Executive Producer, W. Rodney Hammond, Ph.D.
Associate Producer, Betty R. Yung, Ph.D.
Research Press

The PACT program is a culturally sensitive video which provides a detailed model for planning, organizing, and conducting violence prevention groups specifically designed for African American youth.

PACT focuses on the problem of expressive violence, which often involves physical conflict between family, friends, or acquaintances. This type of violence is preventable and yet represents the greatest threat to adolescents. It is frequently triggered by trivial arguments over clothing, boyfriends, girlfriends, or perceived insults.

The PACT program was developed to help reduce youth violence by teaching adolescents the skills they need to deal calmly and effectively with anger-provoking situations. It is an excellent prevention program for all students, including those who exhibit behavior problems or those with a history of victimization or exposure to violence.

The Peacemakers Program: Effective Violence Prevention for Early Adolescent Youth

by Jeremy P. Shapiro

The problem of youth violence has become so well-known to youth-serving professionals that detailed documentation of the seriousness of the problem no longer seems necessary. In schools, the fear, anger and fighting experienced by many students harms them academically as well as emotionally. The threat of violence distracts many students from their work; it is practically impossible to concentrate on learning when one faces a fight after school. When arguments and threats escalate into violence, the result is disruption of school activities, agitation of other students, disciplinary incidents and, sometimes, suspensions and expulsions which cause further loss of time for learning.

Increased violence rates have been accompanied by efforts at prevention. Security measures such as metal detectors can stop students from bringing weapons to school but do little to address the anger, meanness and fistfights that are the much larger, although less newsworthy, part of the problem. Violence prevention programs that seek to positively influence the everyday psychosocial functioning of young people seem to have more potential as a solution to the problem of youth violence.

Past Prevention Efforts

Violence prevention is easier said than done. Many interventions are delivered year after year with no objective evidence of effectiveness. Most evaluations have produced results that are weak and inconsistent, if not simply discouraging (Earls, 1994).

Age is an important variable in the violence prevention field. The picture for early elementary school students has brightened considerably in the last several years, with positive evaluation results obtained for the *Peacebuilders* program (Embry, Flannery, Vazsoni, Powell, & Atha, 1996) and the *Second Step* intervention (Grossman et al., 1997). Unfortunately, there have been no similarly encouraging evaluation results from programs for older children and adolescents (Larson, 1998) — that is, until very recently.

The Peacemakers Program

Fortunately, the period of adolescence is not "too late" for effective prevention programming, and major reductions of violent behavior can be achieved for older youth. A new program has produced the positive evaluation results that have been elusive with adolescents. In fact, these program effects were not only significant, they were strikingly large on some important dimensions.

The Peacemakers Program is a school-based violence prevention intervention for students in grades 4 through 8. It was provided to 1400 students in the Cleveland Public Schools last academic year (1997-98). A rigorous evaluation, with pre- and post-intervention measures and comparison to a control group, found significant, positive change on 6 of the 7 outcome variables we assessed, including knowledge of psychosocial skills and aggression-related interpersonal behavior as reported by both teachers and students. The most dramatic results were achieved in serious violent incidents. *The Peacemakers Program* resulted in a 41% reduction in aggression-related disciplinary incidents and a 67% decrease in suspensions for violent behavior.

Peacemakers was designed as a multimodal program utilizing a variety of activities to accommodate a variety of learning styles. In addition to didactic instruction by teachers and counselors, there are a series of stories written for the program, writing exercises, use of the Socratic method, role-plays and graphically-designed handouts. There is an emphasis on active learning, drawing on personal experience and student input into the class discussions, while at the same time the teacher or counselor makes sure the program's messages come through.

Program materials consist of a Teacher's Manual, a Counselor's Manual and student workbooks, which can be obtained from Applewood Centers, Inc. The manuals are detailed and user-friendly, providing clear directions for implementing the program. Because the psychosocial content of the program is unfamiliar to many teachers, we suggest approximately six hours of training prior to beginning the program. Counselors or psychologists who have experience with aggressive youth do not need special training to implement the interventions delineated in their manual.

Program Content

The core of the program is a 17-session curriculum delivered on the basis of detailed manuals and, optimally, training. The content is as follows:

1. *Understanding Violence and Peacemaking* invites students to think about the goal of a more peaceful community and offers the program as an opportunity to learn skills and options for dealing with conflict situations.

2. *Our Personal Strengths* offers an abstract concept of "strength" that extends beyond the physical type and asks students to share personal strengths that can contribute to violence prevention.

3. *Our Values and Principles* elicits discussion of personal values and offers the Golden Rule as a meta-value that positively affects behavior and outcomes in conflict situations.

4. *Pride, Shame and Self-esteem* is devoted to self-concept issues in conflict and violence, with an emphasis on changing the common view that violence is the most effective way to repair damage to self-esteem after the experience of disrespect.

5. *Feelings in Conflicts, I: Anger Control* includes discussion of students' anger triggers and teaches a structured, 4-step anger management technique.

6. *Feelings in Conflicts, II: Excitement, Power and Fear* addresses the roles of several emotions in violence and identifies positive ways for young people to meet their normal needs for excitement, power and safety.

7. *Avoiding Conflicts, I: People, Places and Behaviors* introduces the idea of violence as a sequential, step-by-step process (analogous to falling dominoes) and teaches ways to prevent this process from getting started.

8. *Avoiding Conflicts, II: Reading Other People* attempts to decrease hostile attributional bias by informing students about the ambiguous nature of many social behaviors and the negative consequences of jumping to conclusions about hostile intentions behind other people's behavior.

9. *Social Problem-solving* teaches a structured, 5-step technique for analyzing interpersonal problems, planning solutions to them and foreseeing the consequences of actions.

10. *Dealing with Conflicts* discusses the central role of conflict in violence, the naturalness of human conflict, and the idea that conflict does not have to lead to violence.

11. *Assertive, Fair Behavior* describes a continuum of conflict response ranging from passive to aggressive, and recommends the midpoint of assertive, fair behavior as a way to stand up for oneself without pushing other people around.

12. *Effective Communication, I: Talking* teaches techniques for assertively expressing oneself in a conflict, including focusing on the other person's behavior instead of personality, and making "I statements."

13. *Effective Communication, II: Listening* introduces the idea that listening is as important as talking in communication and provides behavioral instruction in listening behaviors that make the other person feel heard.

14. *Conflict Resolution, I: Working it Out* provides step-by-step instruction in engaging angry people in collaborative problem-solving, negotiation, compromise and apology.

15. *Conflict Resolution, II: Being a Leader in a Conflict* offers ways to deal with particularly difficult, exasperating or threatening behavior by raising the other person's behavior up to a higher level where collaborative problem-solving can occur.

16. *Knowing When to Walk Away* offers instruction and positive ways to view prevention behaviors at the end of the violence process, when all previous efforts have failed, and walking away is the only non-violent option left.

17. *Friends Don't Let Friends Fight* deals with the issue of peer pressure, first by developing students' ability to resist negative influences and, second, by encouraging careful consideration of one's own functioning as a source of peer pressure, which can be either negative or positive.

Together, these sessions seem to address the main psychosocial factors involved in violent versus interpersonally skillful responses to conflict. The curriculum covers emotions, self-concept issues, cognition, behavior and group dynamics. The sessions offer instruction in proactively avoiding conflicts, responding effectively to conflicts once they have begun, and removing oneself from conflict situations in which the other person's maladaptive behavior makes resolution impossible.

Distinctive Features of the Program

Peacemakers shares much of its content with other violence prevention programs. These common features include work on anger management, social perception, problem-solving, empathy, assertiveness, conflict resolution and peer pressure. Outside of the curriculum, there are important intervention components designed to increase reinforcing attention for positive student behavior and to infuse program content into the everyday school culture. However, *Peacemakers* also includes a number of unique elements not shared by other programs, and these may account for the unusually strong, positive results achieved by the intervention.

Remediation as well as prevention: Along with the prevention component delivered by teachers, *Peacemakers* includes a remediation component for students with serious aggression-related problems. Remediation is delivered by school psychologists, counselors or administrators involved in addressing discipline problems. The Counselor's Manual has the same content as the Teacher's Manual, but the format for implementation is

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PEACEMAKERS *continued from page 19*

quite different. The Counselor's Manual includes guidance on assessing the specific psychosocial factors involved in a student's problems with aggression, so that the sessions directly addressing those factors can be identified. School psychologists and counselors often can not provide all 17 sessions to an individual student, but this is not a problem because the teacher-delivered program will fill in the gaps, and the individual work can focus on the issues most problematic for the student. Because of the coordination between these two aspects of the intervention, students sent to the office for fighting hear the same messages, in the same language, that they hear in class.

Values: *Peacemakers* is unusual among violence prevention programs in that it deals explicitly with the issue of violence-related values. This component was considered necessary because of the close relationship between values and motives; specifically, young people who believe that violence is the most honorable and admirable response to conflict will not be motivated to learn the non-violent conflict management skills offered by programs. Of course, the program includes no religious material. Instruction in values is based on the Golden Rule, which is presented simply as the humanistic idea that other people, as well as ourselves, have real feelings and deserve to be treated with consideration, even when they make us angry.

Use of fiction and writing: The curriculum includes a series of stories with accompanying writing exercises that were written by a children's author specifically for integration into the program. The stories, with characters the same age as the students, illustrate and concretize the issues, skills and attitudes taught by the curriculum. The writing exercises help students apply and practice the skills they are learning. The fiction and writing components also have the practical advantage of including academic work in the program, so that class time spent on violence prevention is not entirely lost to academic instruction. *Peacemakers* can be scheduled as part of the school's Language Arts or English program.

Interactive Multimedia on CD-ROM

There is a new and innovative violence prevention technology that was not part of last year's evaluation of *Peacemakers* but that could easily be added to that program. In collaboration with EDR Corporation, with funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, we developed an interactive, computerized learning activity on CD-ROM that teaches the same attitudes and skills taught by *Peacemakers*. The CD-ROM, called *The Coolien Challenge*, uses video, audio, animation, graphics and music to provide didactic instruction and skill application to a variety of interpersonal situations.

Despite its serious purpose, young people perceive this learning activity as an exciting computer game. In our pilot testing, students were not required to use the CD-ROM and, in fact, could use it only during their free time. Nonetheless, students lined up to play the game, and observations conducted as part of the study found that 92% of the terminations of game use were involuntary, that is, were caused by the end of free time. In addition, students who obtained high scores on a measure of aggression-related problems spent more time using the CD-ROM than students with low scores, suggesting that the product was especially attractive to youth who needed it the most.

Conclusion

The evaluation of *Peacemakers* indicated that the program achieved a high degree of success at its goal of reducing violence in fourth-through-eighth-grade students, with evaluation results including a 41% decrease in aggression-related disciplinary incidents and a 67% reduction in suspensions for violent behavior.

Although youth violence has become widespread, it does not appear to be an unsolvable problem. Interventions that help youth give serious thought to the issue of violence in their lives and that provide tools for positive behavior change can have a major ameliorative impact on violence. Teachers and school support staff equipped with detailed intervention manuals can provide youth with experiences that change their violence-related emotions, thoughts and actions. Effective violence prevention is a matter of reaching and positively influencing the hearts and minds of our youth.

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Anger Management for Young Children: A Handout for Parents

by Beth M. Levy

Background

Anger is a natural emotion experienced by all living creatures. Animals and humans react and display behaviors when angry, and although humans can also use language to communicate feelings, wants and desires, they often use actions and behaviors instead. Some of these angry feelings and responses are inborn; however, adults also teach children how to respond to emotions. Children learn how to react and handle different feelings from watching parents, friends and teachers around them.

Anger can be a good emotion because it tells us if something is not right, or if we are in danger. Learning how and when to respond to the different feelings of anger is the lesson we need to teach our children. The best way to teach children to handle their anger is by modeling appropriate behaviors, and this is especially important for young children, who are learning how to associate new words with their feelings.

Development

Typically, children direct their aggressive behaviors toward other children more often than toward adults. Children display their anger inappropriately because they do not have good coping strategies. Children do not understand how situations or actions can evoke angry feelings. Something triggers a reaction in the child and they do not know how to respond. Young children are not yet intellectually able to correctly label emotions and to respond in a socially desired manner. They get physical (i.e., pushing, hitting, biting, kicking and screaming) because their language has not yet fully developed and they react with inborn responses.

As children grow, understanding the typical behaviors associated with each developmental (age) stage is helpful to parents. Although these stages do not match every child perfectly, as they do not take into account individual temperament or environmental factors, they can be useful guidelines to follow.

A two-year-old child: Two-year-olds have difficulty making decisions. They want to know everything. "*Why?*" Becomes the two-year-old's ultimate question. During this stage of development there continues to be little, if any, sharing. By two and a half, children start to display intense and often violent emotions. They want everything, especially what they cannot have. Children at this stage express strong feelings for what they desire and will do whatever they need to in order to obtain the desired object.

A three-year-old child: The child at three starts feeling more independent and more comfortable sharing with other children. At the same time, the three-year-old frequently feels scared in new situations and as a result strives for control again. Their assertiveness is shown through verbal threats, such as: "You are stupid" or "I hate you."

A four-year-old child: At four a child will do anything if provoked. Kicking, spitting and even running away is often seen when the child does not get his way. While they need boundaries, the four-year-old enjoys pushing the limits. Verbal aggressiveness increases with four-year-old children by more name-calling.

A five-year-old child: Five-year-old children want to be "good" and would rather stay with what is comfortable than try new things. Children at this age often exhibit some tantrums and sulking when they become upset.

A six-year-old child: When you are around a six-year-old, you never know what will happen because they rarely make up their mind. The six-year-old is striving for independence and displays an intense need to be first and the best. This causes much anxiety for them. They also want to have everyone's attention. They become verbally and physically aggressive and use such phrases as: "Make me" or "No, I'm not going to do it." By teasing and bullying, the six-year-old can be very loud and bossy.

A seven-year-old child: Seven-year-old children tend to withdraw when things become difficult and to look inward at themselves. They start thinking about the world around them. Worry becomes a major preoccupation, and they show increased concern with what is fair versus what is unfair.

An eight-year-old child: The eight-year-old child is inquisitive — interested in everything that is going on. Friction and jealousy frequently arise among siblings because children at this age still want their mother's attention and will rival with siblings to get it. It is very easy to hurt the feelings of an eight-year- old.

A nine-year-old child: Nine-year-old children do not want to be told what to do by their parents. They resent these directions and often rebel. These children can often be found fighting, complaining, criticizing and ignoring their parents.

What Can I Do as a Parent?

Before you can help your children deal with their anger, you must first explore your own feelings of anger and the way in which you deal with these feelings. Children learn from observing their parents. It is important that parents be aware that their method of dealing with anger is observed and will be imitated and learned by their children. Furthermore, understanding the typical developmental behaviors of children helps parents to

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know which behaviors are not typical and might need looking into. Here are some things to try:

Positive reinforcement: This is a very effective method for teaching children desired behaviors because children strive for attention. Focus on your child's good behaviors, instead of focusing on their bad behaviors. Reward your child often with a small treat or special attention for every short period of time that your child behaves appropriately. Be consistent because your child needs to clearly understand what is expected of him. If you need assistance creating a behavior plan, contact your school psychologist.

Help children understand and express feelings: When voices and tantrums become louder and louder, tell the child that you will wait until they use a calm voice. You may also validate their anger while asking what you can do to help, such as "I see that you are angry, what can I do to help?" Children may not always get what they want, but you are teaching them that their feelings matter. You also teach them that there are more acceptable ways to achieve their desired goal or to obtain a desired object without anger.

Help children learn problem solving skills: Role-playing different solutions and teaching problem solving techniques will also be beneficial to your child because you can demonstrate positive, non-violent ways to resolve conflict.

Self talk and relaxation: By school age, positive self talk can help your child to talk himself down from an angry outburst. Self talk statements such as, "I can handle this", "I'm okay, just stay calm", etc., are useful ways to help children control their anger at times when they especially need to remain calm. Teach them relaxation techniques such as: count to 10 before taking action, or taking several deep breaths when faced with difficult or anger-provoking situations. When teaching your child new techniques, keep them developmentally appropriate.

Parents can play a positive role by helping their children deal with anger. Parents who use positive approaches and modeling techniques will enable their children to grow emotionally strong and able to deal with the difficult situations they will face in the course of everyday life.

Some children inappropriately display anger because they have not yet learned more effective coping strategies. There are other children who may become violently angry or who may display hazardous behaviors that are dangerous to themselves and others. If there is an increase in your child's anger, determine whether any significant changes have occurred which might be upsetting your child. If your child is displaying severely violent or dangerous behaviors, it is strongly recommended that you seek additional assistance from a school psychologist or a pediatrician.

Resources for Parents

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Clark, L. (1996). *SOS! Help for parents* (2nd edition). Parents Press.

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Martin, M. & Waltman-Greenwood, C. (1995). *Solve your child's school-related problems.* New York: HarperPerennial.

McKay, M., Fanning, P., Paleg, K., & Landis, D. (1996). *When anger hurts your kids: A parent's guide.* Oakland, California: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Severe, S. (1996). *How to behave so your children will, too!* Greentree Publishing.

Resources for Elementary or Preschool Children

Aborn, A. (1994). *Everything I do you blame on me!* King of Prussia, PA: The Center for Applied Psychology, Inc. (Grades K-6).

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NASP Mission Statement

The mission of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence, and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing program evaluation, and caring professional service.

Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation: A Guide for Educators

by Mary M. Chittooran

Background

Conflict is both natural and inevitable in human relations. It is neither good nor bad in itself, but it is the response to conflict that makes it either a destructive experience or the medium through which problems can be aired and solutions reached. Two common responses to conflict — avoidance/withdrawal and verbal or physical confrontation — are not constructive and usually worsen matters. Another response is communication, which is the most effective way to resolve differences between individuals.

Schools should teach students conflict resolution skills since unresolved conflicts can lead to poor academic performance, low self-esteem and other social-behavioral problems. Typical school-based programs focus on teaching a conflict resolution curricula, skills-based mediation programs, or a combination of the two.

Peer Mediation

One of the most frequently used skills-based approaches to conflict resolution is that of peer mediation. Used to solve serious conflicts that cannot be handled independently by the individuals involved, peer mediation relies on an impartial third party to help students engaged in a conflict to use communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. The mediator does not render a judgement, force a solution, or otherwise influence a decision.

Rationale: Peer mediation is designed to teach students to find alternative ways to resolve conflicts and to encourage them to solve their own problems in a constructive fashion. When peer mediation is effective, it allows students to understand and respect different points of view. Peer mediation teaches problem-solving and decision-making, improves communication and critical thinking skills, increases cooperation and reduces adult intervention in student conflicts. Positive effects have been found in elementary, middle and high schools and with children of varied backgrounds and ability levels.

The Peer Mediator: The peer mediator is usually nominated by peers or teachers and is then selected on the basis of teacher recommendations. The most effective peer mediators have good judgment, enjoy the respect and trust of their peers, display leadership abilities and have good communication skills. They are not necessarily the best-behaved students in their classes, or "straight -A" students. The peer mediator's role is to monitor the problem-solving process, to be unbiased, to listen empathetically to the disputants, to be respectful to them, to help them work together to solve problems and to keep information confidential. Peer mediators undergo specific training in conflict resolution and mediation, with most sources recommending between 12 and 20 contact-hours, depending on the age of the student.

Peer Mediation Procedures

Students may request mediation when they are involved in a dispute or they may be referred by teachers, administrators and parents. In any event, participation is voluntary. Once students agree to engage in mediation, the peer mediator assigned to a case arranges a meeting at some neutral setting. Students are asked to sit facing each other, with the peer mediator between them. Other parties are usually not permitted in the room. The following are the six typical steps used in mediation:

1. Open the Session

Students are introduced to each other and to the peer mediator. Ground rules are stated and discussed. Both disputants must agree to respect each other, to be honest, to stay calm, to listen to the other's point of view, to be willing to cooperate to find a solution and to focus on issues, not the person (no name-calling, blaming, shouting, or interrupting). The peer mediator secures a commitment from both parties to follow all ground rules.

2. Gather Information

Each student is asked, one at a time, for their version of the problem. Mediators may assign each student a specific amount of time during which they may speak uninterrupted. The peer mediator's role is to use effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills such as eye contact, empathy, restating, summarizing and clarifying to obtain as much relevant information as possible.

3. Focus on Common Interests

The peer mediator then asks questions to determine what each student wants and why they want it. Common interests are identified and stated and form a springboard for further discussion. For example, the students may indicate that they have a common interest in solving the problem as quickly as possible.

4. Create Options

The peer mediator then explains that brainstorming will be used to find solutions to the conflict and describes the rules for brainstorming. Participants try to come up with as many solutions to the problem as possible. However, at this stage, ideas may not be judged, evaluated or criticized, however far-fetched or unworkable they may seem. The peer mediator may write down ideas as they are offered and may ask questions for clarification.

5. Evaluate Options and Choose a Solution

The students then evaluate their list of options with the help of the peer mediator. Their task is then to decide on

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one option that best meets their needs. The peer mediator then summarizes the solution.

6. Generate an Agreement and Seal It

Each student says what they will do to solve the problem. The agreement is written down by the peer mediator. The students sign the document and the peer mediator signs as a witness. The mediator congratulates the students on a successful session and encourages them to shake hands to seal the deal. Students may seek additional mediation if the agreement is not working. Changes in the original agreement must be agreed upon and signed by both students and the peer mediator.

Critical Components

Peer mediation can be a highly successful tool for conflict resolution in the schools. When starting a program, the critical components are:

1. clear, specific goals and procedures
2. an advisory committee of school professionals, parents and community representatives
3. adequate funding and resources
4. community support
5. handbooks and brochures advertising the new program
6. selection and training of program coordinators and peer mediators
7. orientation sessions for staff and students
8. established evaluation criteria
9. careful monitoring procedures

Resources

Organizations

CHAMPS Peer Leadership, Inc., 14425 N. Scottsdale Rd., Suite 400, Scottsdale, AZ 85254-3449, (602) 991- 9110.

Community Board Program, Inc., 1540 Market Street, Suite 490, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 552-1250.

"We must avoid fragmentation in implementing programs. The concepts in preventing and responding to violence must be integrated into effective school reform, including socially and academically supportive instruction and caring, a welcoming atmosphere, and providing good options for recreation and enrichment."

— Howard Adelman, Professor of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles

National Institute for Dispute Resolution, National Association for Mediation in Education, 1726 M Street, NW., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036-4502, (202) 466-4764.

Peace Education Foundation, 1900 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL, 33132-1025, 1-800-749-8838.

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Functional Behavioral Assessment: Looking Beyond Applied Behavior Analysis

by J. Ron Nelson, Maura L. Roberts, Michael Bullis, Craig Albers & Barbara Ohland

Over the years, different assessment procedures have been designed and conducted for a variety of educational purposes. Historically, traditional norm-referenced assessments have been used to classify or determine the eligibility of individuals for certain services. While traditional measures provide useful information for these purposes, the data obtained from such assessments often cannot be directly linked to the actual problem behaviors in the classroom and provide little useful information for designing appropriate interventions. One alternative to traditional assessment procedures is the functional assessment (FA) approach. In general, a functional assessment is characterized by the following features: (a) it includes multiple and different types of direct and indirect assessment procedures; (b) it addresses the student's problem within the setting or conditions in which the individual will be placed; (c) it provides information or data necessary to design interventions; and (d) it allows for ongoing assessment of a student's behaviors (Frey, 1984; Halpern & Fuhrer, 1984).

Given these unique characteristics, there is little question why functional assessment or, specifically, functional behavioral assessment (FBA) procedures were included within the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and that they will play an increasing role in the education of students with disabilities. Within the section on discipline, these amendments require that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team consider positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports if a student with disabilities has behavior problems (Discipline provisions, 1997). Further, the behavior intervention plan must be based on a FBA. Although the amendments do not specify the theoretical foundation on which the term FBA must be based (Nelson, Roberts, Mathur, & Rutherford, in press), many professionals believe that it is linked solely to the field of applied behavior analysis (e.g., National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1998). Indeed, we believe that school professionals and others should consider a broader category of functional assessments when conducting functional behavioral assessments within school settings. Thus we use the terms functional assessment and functional behavioral assessment (FBA) interchangeably throughout the remainder of the paper.

Problematic Reliance on Applied Behavior Analysis Procedures

Over-reliance on using functional applied behavior analytic (FABA) assessment procedures in adherence to the 1997 IDEA amendments may be problematic for four reasons. The first reason centers on general disagreement in the field of applied behavior analysis regarding its basic elements. This is especially the case in regards to the use of functional analysis procedures. Functional analysis is one unique and controversial procedure used in the majority of the FABA assessments. The purpose of the functional analysis is to demonstrate the functional relationship between a problem behavior and the maintaining environmental variables through systematic or experimental manipulations (Halle & Spradlin, 1993). While there is widespread acceptance of the use of FABA, techniques and basic elements of these procedures can vary considerably within the field of applied behavior analysis (Wacker & Reichel, 1993).

The second problem in the use of FABA procedures focuses on the limited external validity of research conducted on these procedures in the field of applied behavior analysis. Although a plethora of databased intervention studies have been conducted, overall, research conducted on FABA in the field of applied behavior analysis provides little information about the feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of these procedures for dealing with many school-based problems. (Nelson et al., in press). Nelson and colleagues, in their review of FABA procedures, found four methodological issues that limited the external validity of such procedures. First, virtually all that is known about the FABA is based on clients with severe or profound mental retardation, most of whom have concomitant medical or genetic conditions. Second, most of what we know about FABA is based primarily on self-injurious behavior. Third, almost all FABAs involve assessments conducted in analog situations rather than natural environments such as classrooms or playgrounds. Finally, most of the investigations were conducted by individuals with advanced training in applied behavior analysis, leaving in doubt whether school-based personnel can implement correctly and appropriately FABAs in public school settings.

The third problem in the use of FABA procedures centers on whether they will be accepted practice in the classroom, regardless of their merits. The lack of FABA research conducted in classroom settings may suggest a deeper philosophical issue regarding educators' beliefs about the nature of behavior and their ability and desire to address students who exhibit challenging behavior (Nelson & Scott, in press). In other words, the question may not be so much whether functional behavior analytic assessment can be validated as whether practitioners are able and willing to engage in such practices.

The final problem in the over-reliance on FABA procedures reflects the fact that a range of fields other than the field of applied behavior analysis have developed and validated functional assessments. It seems imperative that we explore functional assessment procedures used by other disciplines to maximize our knowledge to conduct effective functional behavior assessments related to the 1997 IDEA discipline amendments. This is important because functional

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assessment procedures have captured the interest of professionals in a wide range of fields related to special education including occupational therapy (Velozo, 1993), speech and language pathology (Frattali, 1992), physical therapy (Wickstrom, 1990) and vocational rehabilitation (Halpern & Fuhrer, 1984).

Furthermore, within this broader purview, assessment procedures regarded as functional in nature have been developed with a wide range of populations including those for persons with head injury (Ross, O'Malley, Stein, & Spettell, 1992), deafness (Bullis & Reiman, 1992), visual impairments (Graves, 1990), learning disabilities (McCue, 1989), emotional and behavioral disorders (Bullis, Bull, Johnson, Johnson, 1994), mental retardation (Derby, Wacker, Sasso, & Steege, 1992), psychiatric disability (Cohen & Anthony, 1984) and young children (Lowenthal, 1997). Thus, it is important to look beyond the field of applied behavior analysis to identify how other disciplines related to special education define and use the term "functional assessment" because of the limited nature and application of functional behavior analytic assessment procedures.

Implications for School Psychologists

Looking beyond the field of applied behavior analysis is especially critical to school psychologists because they will play a crucial role in maintaining and expanding the present definition of "psychological services" to meet all the components under the amended law. As one of the most qualified members of the IEP team, school psychologists have the skills and knowledge to manage, design and interpret the results of functional assessment procedures, regardless of discipline. Additionally, they can provide a linkage among the different disciplinary perspectives that are a part of any collaborative problem-solving process within the schools.

The Functional Assessment Approach by Disciplines Related to Special Education

Within the disciplines related to special education, functional assessment methods focus on evaluating the actual skills and capacities of the individual in the natural setting. In other words, multiple assessment instruments are used to determine the individuals' abilities, interests, task performance, general adjustment, social skills and self-determination in relation to the behavioral requirements, possible accommodations and supports available within that setting, rather than primarily focusing on identifying the function of the behavior. (Bullis, Kosko, Waintrup, Kelly & Isaacson, 1994). The diversity of this work in terms of types of disability and professionals is in stark contrast to that conducted in the field of applied behavior analysis. As noted in the first section, applied behavior analysis is not the only field interested in functional assessment.

Although researchers and other professionals have developed functional assessments in just about every area of education (e.g., curriculum-based and authentic assessments), we delimited our look at such procedures utilized by fields related to special education including occupational therapy (Velozo, 1993), speech and language pathology (Frattali, 1992), physical therapy (Wickstrom, 1990) and vocational rehabilitation (Halpren & Fuhrer, 1984). This is not to say that, for example, curriculum-based assessment procedures would not play a role in the functional assessment process noted in the 1997 amendments to IDEA. Rather, we were interested primarily in looking at the broad conceptualizations of the constructs measured through functional assessments. To this end, we provide an overview of the application of functional assessment results in disciplines related to special education (i.e., occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, physical therapy, and vocational rehabilitation).

Application of assessment results: The primary areas and associated constructs assessed through functional assessment for disciplines related to special education are presented in Table 1. Inspection of Table 1 reveals that functional assessment is designed to look at the individual in a comprehensive manner prior to developing an intervention plan. Such assessments essentially direct researchers and other professionals to go beyond the presenting concern(s) (e.g., vocational functioning) and look at a number of dimensions that might be useful in improving the quality of life for the individual (Lewis, Burke, & Carrillo, 1987). For example, for a child who exhibits severe challenging behavior, poor interpersonal skills or a lack of motivation to perform such skills, these are important issues to address in a behavioral intervention plan. But for a particular child who exhibits severe challenging behavior, impaired memory or attention might be even more critical in determining the outcome of the intervention plan.

The products of a functional assessment are the (a) identification of an individual's strengths and weaknesses in a number of functional areas and (b) identification of environmental demands and support services and practices. The products of these functional assessments are not related to identifying the function of the behavior nor to weakening the maintaining contingency associated with the problem behavior, but rather to determining the interaction between the characteristics of the individual's strengths and weaknesses in relation to functioning within a particular setting.

Table 1.
Primary Area Assessed Through Functional Assessment in Disciplines Related to Special Education[1]

Functional Area	*Constructs Measured*
Behavioral/psychosocial	Family relations, personality, interpersonal relationships, behavioral surpluses and deficits
Communication	Auditory and visual reception, oral and graphic expression
Cognitive	Intelligence, attention, impulsivity, memory, problem solving, auditory, visual, and spatial perception
Physical	Gross motor, fine motor skills, strength and endurance
Daily living	Self-care, home maintenance, community awareness and use
Vocational	Aptitudes, interest, academic skills, job seeking skills, job maintenance skills
Environment	Environmental demands, available support structures and practices

[1] The functional areas and constructs measured presented are not exhaustive.

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Discussion

Although the overall goal of functional assessment procedures (regardless of discipline) is to improve the quality of life for individuals with and without disabilities, we would like to highlight three primary distinctions between such procedures in the field of applied behavior analysis and disciplines related to special education. The first distinction focuses on differences in *goal* of functional assessment procedures. The goal of functional assessment procedures in the field of applied behavior analysis is limited to the identification of important, controllable, causal environmental events which are functionally related to a specified set of target behaviors for an individual. In other words, the goal is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of environmentally-based behavioral treatments. In contrast, the goal of functional assessment procedures in disciplines related to special education appears to be much broader. The goal is not only to identify an individual's strengths and limitations, but also to assess the environmental demands and supports available to him or her.

The second distinction centers on the *assessment procedures*. In the field of applied behavior analysis, the assessment procedures tend to focus primarily on environmental events that may be functionally related to a set of targeted behaviors. Although multiple assessment procedures are used (e.g., interviews, observations and experimental manipulations), their purpose is the same (i.e., identification of establishing operations, antecedent variables and consequence events that control target behaviors). In contrast, the multiple assessment procedures used in disciplines related to special education go beyond the identification of environmental events that are functionally related to a specified set of target behaviors. Varied procedures are used to provide a complete picture of individuals and the environments in which they function. In other words, multiple dimensions of an individual are considered to ensure that all important areas and questions are addressed. Additionally, disciplines related to special education tend to utilize psychometrically sound assessment procedures whereas the field of applied behavior analysis relies on behavioral observations and experimental manipulations.

The third distinction focuses on the *application of the assessment results*. The application of the results of a functional assessment in the field of applied behavior analysis primarily rests on adjustments to environmental conditions. For example, one of the most common approaches is to use a differential reinforcement procedure, which withholds relevant reinforcers following inappropriate behavior and presents them following a desired behavior. In contrast, the results of a functional assessment in disciplines related to special education tend to direct professionals to go beyond the salient presenting concern(s) and consider a number of personal dimensions of individuals and the environments in which they function.

Finally, an issue not discussed in the functional assessment literature centers on the relationship between the results of functional assessment procedures and the availability of effective treatment methods. The success of functional assessment, regardless of the area of concern, depends as much on the reliability of the assessment instruments and procedures as on the available treatment methods. The information provided through functional assessment provides an empirical basis for identifying which services and interventions are the most effective. The extent to which this information is useful can be directly connected to the effectiveness and efficiency of the treatments. Further, the available services and interventions must not only be palatable to the other professionals but also to the target students and their families. Functional assessment, regardless of the professional field, is a complex topic encompassing a range of heterogeneous issues, constructs and assessment procedures that clearly warrants continued research and review. Readers are encouraged to more fully explore the rich and varied area of research and practice underlying the functional assessment literature.

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Time-Out: Guidelines for Teachers

by Thomas S. Ewing

Overview of Time-out

Time-out is defined as the withdrawal of opportunity to receive positive reinforcement or the loss of access to positive reinforcers for a specified period of time (e.g., 1-3 minutes). The effect is to reduce the future occurrence of the undesired behavior. There are three important features in this definition: (1) the discrepancy between the time-out environment and the normal "time-in" setting; (2) the loss of access to reinforcement contingent upon the undesired behavior; and (3) a resulting decrease in the future probability that the undesired behavior will recur.

Contrary to popular reasoning, time-out is not accomplished by simply moving an individual to a secluded setting. Such a method may accurately describe isolation, but it is by no means the only way in which time-out can be used.

Time-out Strategies

Two important factors for successful time-out include providing contrast to the time-in environment and being consistent in applying the strategies. The following ten steps should help establish an effective model for implementing time-out procedures to reduce undesired behaviors:

Step 1

Be able to precisely define the behavior you would like to decrease or increase. Example: *The child will decrease the number of times he speaks without raising his hand.* Or: *The child will increase his compliance with teacher given directions.* The definitions need to be as specific as possible.

Step 2

To change the misbehavior, you need to understand why it is being performed. First, observe the child in the setting where the misbehavior occurs. Now look for three things:

- Who pays attention to the misbehavior?
- What type of reinforcement does the child receive for this behavior? (This may include laughing, pointing, looking at, even being yelled at)
- Does the behavior help the child avoid or escape from something he/she may not want to be involved in?

When the child is in the regular or time-in environment, the level of reinforcement can be judged as lean, moderate, or rich. If it is rated as rich, this would mean the child is receiving lots of positive reinforcement (e.g., verbal or physical praise). If the environment is considered lean, the child is receiving very little reinforcement. Moderate would be considered somewhere between lean and rich.

Step 3

For time-out to be an effective intervention, make sure the time-in environment where the undesired behavior occurs would be rated as rich. This serves two purposes: it motivates the child to desire the time-in setting, and it serves as a severe contrast to the non-enriched time-out environment.

Step 4

Warnings about possible consequences generally are not needed if the desired behavior has been pre-taught. If a warning is given, it should be briefly stated (five words or less) without emotion, one time. Any more than this may result in what is called secondary gain. In other words, talking to the child may reinforce and therefore maintain the behavior you are trying to eliminate.

Step 5

When time-out is to be implemented, you do not need to explain "why" to the child, especially if desired behaviors have previously been explained. In the event that a reason is given, it is necessary to follow the same guidelines as stated in Step 4 above.

Step 6

To reduce the occurrence of undesired behavior, time-out may be implemented at two levels:

- Non-exclusionary time-out. This is where you remove reinforcers from the child. There are two levels of non-exclusionary time-out. They are:
  - (a) *Planned ignoring:* This occurs when social reinforcers — usually attention, physical conduct, or verbal interaction — are removed for a brief period of time (10-60 seconds) contingent upon the occurrence of an undesired behavior.
  - (b) *Removal of reinforcement:* When an undesired behavior occurs, you remove materials the child is interacting with for a period of time (1-3 minutes).
- Exclusionary time-out. This is where you remove the child from the reinforcing conditions. Non-exclusionary time-out is less intrusive and should be tried first. Exclusionary time-out has three levels. Listed from least to most intrusive, they are:
  - (a) *Contingent observation:* Here the child is moved from the time-in environment to another location and still observes ongoing or instructional activities. They may not, however, participate in them. Optimal time limits are 30 to 60 seconds.
  - (b) *Exclusion time-out:* Child is removed totally from the time-in environment. The child does not observe ongoing activities. Examples of exclusion are sitting behind a partition or sitting in a corner. Maximum effective time is up to two minutes.
  - (c) *Isolation time-out:* At this level of time-out the child is isolated from all probable reinforcers by being placed in a different room. Isolation requires a previously defined time duration. Generally five minutes should be the longest a child is isolated.

When preparing to implement a time-out procedure, one factor must be taken into consideration: Time-out will *not* work if the child sees it as an *escape*. Example: The child does not want to work on a math test, so he begins talking very loudly. In turn the teacher places him in time-out. This is rewarding to the child because he has avoided or escaped

from a situation he didn't want to be in.

Step 7

In order to enforce a time-out, an adult should always be present. The child should NOT be the one responsible for determining when they are released. There are four general methods of enforcing time-out:

- "Shaping" involves observing the child in time-out and determining how long she can comply, (or "handle" it), then releasing her just short of her maximum tolerance. For example, if you want the child in time-out for two minutes, but find that after 45 seconds he starts making noise, next time release him after 40 seconds. Then in the future, extend the time in small increments until you reach the desired time.
- "Put back" is just as it sounds — you keep putting the child back (in the event they have left) into the time-out setting until the child has been in time-out for the desired time.
- "Holding" is a method of physical restraint. Because of possible injury to the child or the person holding them, this should only be implemented by persons properly trained to do so.
- "Barrier" involves a room from which the child in time-out cannot leave. Because of space limitations and possible legal or ethical issues, this is rarely used in regular school settings.

Step 8

The maximum duration of any time-out setting should be about five minutes. If there is a significant history of longer time-outs, then up to 15 minutes may be utilized.

Step 9

In deciding when to release a child from time-out, there are two common philosophies. Either the student must exhibit the desired behavior for a certain length of time, or the student must serve the entire pre-determined time duration.

Step 10

When the time-out is completed and the child is to be released, again minimize secondary gain. Use either a very brief verbal prompt (such as the child's name and the phrase "time-in") or a physical prompt (such as a touch on the shoulder or a flashing of the lights) to release the child.

Remember, the two most important guidelines to success with time-out are 1) provide contrast to the time-in environment and 2) be consistent in implementation.

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A Prosocial System for Improving Student Discipline and Responsibility

by Jerry McMullen

Schools are microcosms of society. Serving as a behavior management consultant in the schools requires sensitivity to general social trends. Current trends include reduced amounts of parental supervision, diminished support from community and church, and conflicting or antisocial messages in the media and music. For some students, mixed social messages lead to personal confusion that undermines their ability to succeed academically or socially. Many at-risk students demonstrate a lack of positive direction, an unclear sense of self and free-floating aggression. As might be expected, they encounter difficulty in school, family and community situations. Such students are a worrisome but growing minority. This article describes educators' perceptions of recent trends in student behavior and provides an adaptable three-component prosocial system for addressing behavioral management needs.

Trends in Student Behavior

More than 700 educators attending 31 of the author's behavior management workshops were asked to describe changes in student behavior over the past decade. In order of prevalence, they noted the following top ten changes: (1) less respectful, (2) assume less personal responsibility, (3) less parental involvement and supervision, (4) impatient/impulsive/want instant gratification, (5) home challenges school authority/veracity (e.g., the student is right; school is wrong), (6) more noncompliant/oppositional/defiant, (7) negative attitude, (8) difficulty paying attention, (9) more aggressive, and (10) more inappropriate language. Most respondents work in elementary schools in "good" school districts. The picture is more dire when examining responses from "problematic" schools. Educational systems become increasingly stressed as the percentage of students exhibiting challenging behavior rises. One or two disruptive students per class can hinder the learning environment, especially if disruptive behavior is supported by peers. Effective behavior management approaches are essential to address negative trends and promote safe, productive schools.

When providing behavior management assistance, the following questions must be considered. What are the unique needs of each school? What can be done to meet these specific needs? How can negative trends in student behavior be reversed?

Chester County Prosocial Behavior System

During 1993, after serving as a school psychologist for 20 years, I became a behavior management consultant for Chester County (PA) Intermediate Unit. This position was created through the Statewide Support Initiative (SSI) of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. SSI was initiated in 1989 to provide training and technical assistance in areas including behavior management, instructional support, assistive devices, early intervention, transition to adult living and inclusion. SSI's goal is to enhance school districts' capacity to provide effective services and programs for all students, including those with disabilities. Districts seek SSI technical assistance from intermediate unit consultants at their discretion.

Examination of varied behavior management approaches led me to the belief that social skills models are well suited to address negative behavior trends. The work of George Batsche, Howard Knoff (Batsche & Knoff, 1995), and Arnold Goldstein (e.g., McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984) provide the foundation for the Chester County Prosocial Behavior System. Techniques for improving school climate from Michele Borba (Borba, 1995) and Carol Allred (Allred, 1984) are incorporated. Refinements have evolved during three years of application in regular and special education programs in 12 school districts, one intermediate unit, several preschool programs and other education and mental health settings.

The Prosocial Behavior System consists of three components that operate *simultaneously:* (1) analysis of school climate and behavioral expectations; (2) trouble shooting, problem solving and maintenance to address specific areas of concern within schools; and (3) promotion of student discipline and responsibility. This system, which is educative rather than punitive, effectively addresses negative qualitative changes noted above as well as challenging behavior exhibited by individuals. It has proven successful with regular and special education students at preschool through high school levels. Each school adapts the system to meet its needs. When school-level implementation is not possible, modifications can be made for individual classroom use. The following is an overview of the system's three components.

Analysis of School Climate and Behavioral Expectations

The most general aspect of the Prosocial Behavior System requires school personnel to examine the climate and behavioral expectations within their building. School climate is the general social tone and conditions that permeate the school atmosphere. Borba (1995) lists the acquired feelings of security, selfhood, affiliation, mission and competence as the building blocks of self-esteem. These feelings also are essential for students to thrive in school and eventually succeed in work and family settings. Prosocial themes such as respect, cooperation or kindness may be promoted on a school-wide basis through assembly programs, signs and posters, and social reinforcement.

Behavioral expectations are established by delineating behavioral standards, establishing rules to achieve them and enforcing these rules. School personnel must consider if behavioral standards and rules are (a) realistic, (b) well defined, (c) clearly communicated and (d) consistently en-

forced. If problems are noted in standards, rules or enforcement, other components of the Prosocial Behavior System provide means for improvement.

Trouble Shooting, Problem Solving and Maintenance

This component consists of several steps: (1) A committee (often called a prosocial or school climate committee) is formed. A classroom teacher serves as chairperson; an administrator is a member. (2) The committee surveys staff to identify areas of concern (e.g., hallway, cafeteria or bus behavior; in-school suspension; student respect; chronic offenders; positive parental involvement; and staff morale). (3) Concerns are prioritized and improvement strategies are designed. Initially, no more than three areas should be targeted. It is important to focus on a limited number of areas to gain success and, perhaps more important, credibility with staff. (4) Program maintenance is accomplished through committee meetings that assess the effectiveness of improvement strategies, make necessary adjustments or establish different priorities. Committees convene on an as-needed basis, but at least once per month. Forty-five minute meetings prior to school are typical.

The following are examples of trouble shooting and problem solving developed by prosocial committees in Chester County. To demonstrate the system's flexibility, applications at elementary and middle schools are presented.

Example 1: Misbehavior of students entering an elementary school's morning breakfast program. Disputes often start in the neighborhood, then continue on the school bus, during breakfast and into the classroom.

Improvement strategies: (1) Establish rules for entering the building: keep hands and feet to self, walk, stay on the right, use inside voice. (2) Post rules at appropriate entrance points. (3) Place traffic cones in the front hall to assure that students stay to the right. (4) Review rules with the students before they are implemented. (5) Provide students guided practice using proper entry techniques. (6) Require students violating entry rules to exit the building and reenter in an appropriate fashion. (7) Use the following standard verbal prompt for students needing reentry: *"Stop. What is the good choice?"* The student is given "on-the-spot" guided practice of repeating the four entry rules, exiting the building, then reentering properly. (8) Establish assigned seating for breakfast to assure separation of students typically involved in disputes. (9) Enforce appropriate behavior rules during breakfast. (10) Assure that all staff supervising breakfast steadfastly adhere to this system. (11) Serve breakfast to students delayed for "on-the-spot" practice after all other students have been served.

Example 2: Congestion and student conflicts in a middle school's hallways.

Improvement strategies: (1) Station teachers at the end of hallways between periods to observe halls and lavatories. (2) Post teachers at the end of the hallways to monitor walkways when students pass outside between classes. (3) Exit sixth-graders through the front school entrance to board buses at the end of the day. This allows them to bypass the congested main corridor. (4) Have students walk on the right; install directional arrows to provide visual aides. (5) Require sixth-graders to get books from their lockers before lunch, place the books in their post-lunch classroom, then return to that room after lunch without revisiting lockers. (6) Provide a public address announcement to students regarding lateness for class. Clearly state rules and expectations for passing between classes. Assure students that hallway and promptness rules will be enforced. (7) Provide a summary on the public address system at the end of the day letting students know their level of hallway success. Use a positive orientation to the degree that positive feedback is realistic. (8) Require students who leave study hall for other destinations (e.g., library or tutoring) during eighth period to return to study hall before dismissal. (9) Give students tardy slips if they are late for class. These slips are sent to the office by the reporting teacher. Students receiving three slips are required to call their parents at home or at work to inform them of their pattern of tardiness. Duration of these calls is limited to two minutes. Parents are informed of this policy in advance.

Promoting Student Discipline and Responsibility

This component of the Prosocial Behavior System incorporates methods developed by Batsche and Knoff (1995) and Goldstein (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw & Klein, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1990, 1984). These methods allow staff to address student behavior in a way that promotes responsible decision making and, when necessary, teaches social skills that are lacking.

Behavioral psychology suggests that internal language is a key to self-control. Batsche and Knoff's five-step response sequence provides language to help students control impulses and make constructive choices. Initially, this language is externally impressed by teachers and visual icons. Through modeling, application and reinforcement, students internalize this language and use it to exercise self-control and social responsibility. The following is a list of the five steps and a rationale for each:

1. ***Stop and Think.*** Teachers say, "Stop and think" to students behaving inappropriately. This prompt interrupts negative and impulsive behavior. It also aids self-control as students internalize and apply it themselves. For teachers, "Stop and think" is a calm, rational, consistent response to challenging behavior. It reduces the tendency to yell and/or respond emotionally to students.

2. ***Good Choice or Bad Choice.*** After interrupting inappropriate behavior with "stop and think," teachers ask, "Are you going to make a good choice or a bad choice?" This question places responsibility for decisions squarely upon students. It is made clear that consequences are derived from choices made by students. Power struggles and win or lose situations generated by

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student defiance are defused. This step is the key to assuring that students understand that they are responsible for their behavior and subsequent consequences. It is imperative that meaningful consequences accompany students' behavioral choices.

3. ***Choices or Steps.*** This part of the sequence varies according to need. Some students are helped to explore alternative choices. In other cases, students with social skill deficits are taught specific steps of social skills essential for school and interpersonal success. These steps are concrete and specific. For example, possible steps for *listening* are: (1) Feet on the floor. (2) Bottom on the chair. (3) Hands folded. (4) Eyes on the speaker. (5) Mouth closed. Goldstein's *Skillstreaming* books (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1990) offer steps for teaching social skills to promote classroom survival, establish friendships, deal with feelings, use alternatives to aggression and cope with stress. (The role of *Skillstreaming* in the Prosocial Behavior System is discussed below.)
4. ***Just do it!*** Teachers say, "Just do it!" This activates students who opt for good behavioral choices and reduces verbiage. This message is not used for students who make bad choices; these students experience consequences associated with their choice.
5. ***How did I do?*** This step is used for self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Students reflect upon the results of their choices and consider behavioral alternatives when needed. This step can be accomplished informally through verbal review with teachers and/or peers or formally through the use of self-rating forms.

The Role of Skillstreaming

Skillstreaming offers an effective method of teaching social skills; however, it is *not* an essential part of the Prosocial Behavior System. Most of our teachers and schools resist taking time from academic instruction to model and role play social skills. Schools are much more inclined to work with school climate, trouble shooting and problem solving, and consistent language (i.e., "Stop and think." "Good choice or bad choice?") than implement *Skillstreaming*. Schools are made aware of *Skillstreaming*, and many adapt aspects of this approach to their needs. Examples of adaptations include:

(a) Schools readily teach the skill of listening. Student listening is activated by a "Give me five" (for the five steps of listening) prompt followed by the teacher counting backwards from five to one. The entire class is to be in the listening position by the time the teacher says, "One." This prompt, created by Francie McMullen, quickly orients students. Group incentives may be awarded to reinforce compliance. After this procedure has been taught, teachers find that even young children can gain their classmates' attention with directions such as, "Give me five" or "I need listening."

(b) Teachers dealing with severe behavior problems are more inclined to teach social skills. Some Chester County Intermediate Unit classes for severely emotionally disturbed students spent as much as five weeks teaching the skill of ignoring. Mastery of this skill was essential to reduce interpersonal conflict and volatility triggered by name calling and teasing. Other social skills were not taught to these students until progress with *ignoring* was evident.

(c) Some schools use commercial or school-made videos, orientation programs and assemblies to model key social skills. Prosocial assemblies are creative and fun for staff, students and parents. North Coventry Elementary's faculty sang and danced to Aretha Franklin's *Respect*. A teacher in a bear costume moderated an assembly on the "bear necessities" for getting along with others in Beaumont Elementary School. Stetson Middle School sends eighth graders to each feeder elementary school to provide assembly programs for fifth graders who will arrive in the fall. Student role plays demonstrate prosocial concepts and problem-solving techniques.

(d) Several middle and high schools have changed the name and nature of their in-school suspension to OS (Organized Study) and R & R (Respect and Responsibility). Students in these settings complete problem analysis logs, view social skills videos and review skills needed to be successful in class. The emphasis is on prosocial skill development rather than punishment. One school allows students to select "time away" in OS when a short cool-down interval is needed. Although formal data is not yet available, reports indicate that these prosocial rooms are much more effective than traditional in-school suspension.

Staff Training

The Prosocial Behavior System is introduced to schools through inservice programs lasting three to six hours. When possible, all building staff attend. Scheduling sometimes requires separate training sessions for faculty and support staffs. Participants are given the opportunity to volunteer for the Prosocial Committee at the conclusion of inservice presentations. The trainer may attend several Prosocial Committee meetings to facilitate prioritization of concerns and development of improvement strategies during the initial phase of trouble shooting and problem solving.

Parent Training

Schools adopting the Prosocial Behavior System include some form of parent training. This typically involves working with the PTO or site-based management team. Parents are kept informed via school newsletters or other written communication. School climate projects involve parents when appropriate. Stetson Middle School emphasizes parent-teacher alliance in students' academic and social-skill development by referring to parents as the "night-time faculty."

Student Involvement

Some schools enlist student committees to outline concerns and improvement strategies with guidance from a faculty advisor. Input from student committees is considered in conjunction with teacher input. There is a high degree of congruence regarding both concerns and improvement strategies when student and faculty opinions are compared. Stetson Middle School was an innovator in this area. Their student committee was nominated by staff. Faculty from each grade level selected ten student representatives: two academic leaders, two social leaders, two extracurricular leaders, two students prone to getting in trouble (but responsible enough to participate) and two "nice" kids. Recommendations from faculty and students tend to be implemented with less resistance than those mandated by administration.

Outcome Data

Schools implementing the Prosocial Behavior System consistently report improvements in school climate and student discipline. Listed below are measured outcomes obtained by several Chester County schools.

Beaver Creek Elementary
(Downingtown Area School District)
(Prosocial Behavior System implemented at the beginning of the 1995-96 school year.)

School Year	Suspensions (Sept thru March)	Suspensions (Sept thru June)
1992-93	7	Unavailable
1993-94	6	Unavailable
1994-95	19	33
1995-96	0	1

Stetson Middle School
(West Chester Area School District)
(Prosocial Behavior System implemented at the beginning of the 1994-95 school year.)

School Year	Suspensions	Fighting and Physical Assaults
1993-94	813	78
1994-95	443	54
1995-96	411	28

North Coventry Elementary, 4th — 5th grade
(Owen J. Roberts School District)
(Prosocial Behavior System implemented during November 1995.)

Month (1995-96)	Discipline Referrals
September	13
October	14
November	6
December	2
January	3
February	4

Conclusion

Student behavior has changed over the past decade. Educators report noticeable increases in student disrespect, irresponsibility, impulsivity and noncompliance. Students with the most pronounced behavioral problems often lack positive social principles for guiding their behavior. Some manifest unstable aggressive tendencies directed at themselves or others. To effectively deal with school discipline, behavior management approaches must address challenges posed by current negative behavioral trends as well as individual acts of misbehavior. There are no easy answers. Chances for success are improved when effective models of prevention and intervention are designed, adapted to the needs of schools, and shared with others.

The Prosocial Behavior System used in Chester County enhances school climate and improves student discipline though the development of prosocial skills. The system is educative, not punitive; furthermore, it is versatile. It has proven effective with regular and special needs students at preschool through high school levels. In addition to its application in schools, the system has been adapted for parent training and use in mental health settings.

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Resolution on Children, Guns, and Other Weapons

The Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists recognizes that guns and other weapons can — and, unfortunately, often do — hurt children. Guns and other weapons injure and kill thousands of children in the United States each year, through acts of violence and accidents and when the guns and other weapons are used by children and adults. Guns and other weapons may result in psychological harm to children when their family members or friends are injured and killed. The increasing presence of guns and other weapons in schools and communities may create a threatening, hostile, and fearful climate which adversely affects children's psychological development and school learning.

Therefore, the Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists resolves to:

a. Support public policies on gun control which effectively address the potential physical and psychological harm that guns may cause for children;

b. Promote the development of policies and practices within schools and communities which effectively address the potential physical and psychological harm that guns and other weapons may cause for children;

c. Assist policy makers, community leaders, parents, educators, school psychologists, and others with creating safe environments for children and protecting the physical and psychological well-being of children; and

d. Work collaboratively with other professional and advocacy groups in the implementation of the practices described in this resolution.

Adopted by NASP Executive Board, 1994

Resources

Curricula

Goldstein, A., Palumbo, J., Striepling, S. & Voutsinas, A. (1995). ***Break it up: A teachers' guide to managing student aggression.*** Champaign, IL: Research Press: (217) 352-3273. Video available.

Kreldier, W. J. (1994). ***Conflict resolution in the middle school. A curriculum and teaching guide.*** Boston: Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibilities: (617) 492-8820. (Companion curriculum for elementary students also available — *Creative conflict resolution: Over 200 activities for keeping peace in the classroom.)*

McGinnis, E. & Goldstein, A. (1997). ***Skillstreaming the elementary school child: New strategies and perspectives for teaching prosocial skills.*** Research Press: (217) 352-3273. Also available from NASP Publications at (301) 657-0270.

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Web

NASP's National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families — ***www.naspweb.org/center***

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practices, improving services for children and youth with emotional and behavioral problems — ***www.air-dc.org/cecp/cecp.html***

Council for Exceptional Children — ***www.cec.sped.org***

Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services — ***www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass***

Families and Advocates Partnership for Education, information on IDEA '97 — ***www.fape.org***

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health — ***www.ffcmh.org***

IDEA Practices Site, information for parents, pupil services personnel and school administrators on implementing IDEA '97 — ***www.ideapractices.org***

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities — ***nichcy.org***

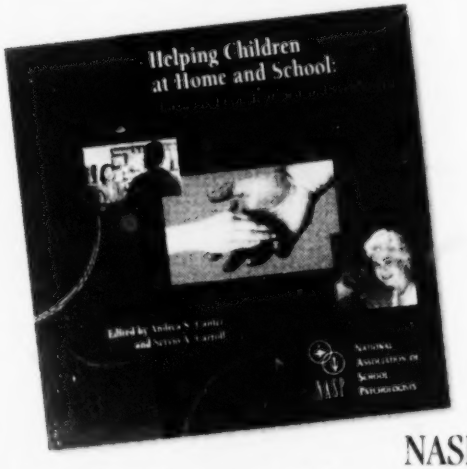
NASP's Safe School Resources — ***www.naspweb.org/center/safe_schools/safeschools.htm***

Partnership Against Violence, The PAVNET Resources Page — ***www.pavnet.org***

U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools Program — ***www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS***

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services — ***www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS***

U.S. Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's *Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Initiative* — ***www.samhsa.gov/sfsc0421.htm***



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School psychologists are found in every school system in the nation. Over 26,000 in number, they are highly trained in education, mental health, child development and learning theory. They are problem solvers who, working with others, assist in changing environments, attitudes and systems to help children use their strengths to succeed in academic learning, social skills and citizenship. School psychologists coordinate and evaluate needs unique to individuals with special learning and behavior problems. They promote the use of research-based psychology theory to assist in curriculum, instruction and school reform. This is carried out through team problem solving; consultation; staff, teacher and parent training; research and evaluation; direct interventions; assessment; referral and case management in collaboration with other pupil services professionals, such as school social workers, counselors and others.

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The National Association of School Psychologists represents over 21,000 school psychologists and related professionals throughout the United States and in 25 foreign countries. Founded in 1969, it is the world's largest organization of school psychologists.

The mission of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence, and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing program evaluation, and caring professional service.

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